DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 403 667 EA 028 218

AUTHOR	Brubaker, Dale L.; Coble, Larry D.
TITLE	Staying on Track: An Educational Leader's Guide to Preventing Derailment and Ensuring Personal and Organizational Success.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-8039-6538-9
PUB DATE	97
NOTE	155p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Corwin Press, Inc., 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320-2218 (paperback: ISBN-0-8039-6538-9, $18.95; hardcover: ISBN-0-8039-6537-0; $42.95).
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrator Effectiveness; Administrator Role; *Career Development; Leadership Training; *Organizational Development; *Organizational Effectiveness; *Professional Development; Promotion (Occupational)

ABSTRACT

The term "derailment" refers to situations in which individuals fall short of their career goals or groups fail to meet their organizational objectives. This book sets forth strategies to prevent derailment, both at the individual and organizational level. Following the prologue in the form of a cautionary tale, chapter 1 provides self-assessment checklists for vice principals, principals, and superintendents. Chapter 2 offers examples of derailment situations drawn from a survey of 250 school leaders across the United States and from the journal entries of 150 current and aspiring superintendents. Anti-derailment recommendations are offered in chapter 3. The fourth chapter describes the important role of staff development in helping educational leaders avoid and deal productively with derailment. The fifth chapter focuses on the principal's role in shared decision making and teacher-leader development. One table is included. The appendix contains resources and case studies on organizational communication. (Contains 44 references.) (LMI)

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Staying on Track

An Educational Leader's Guide to Preventing Derailment and Ensuring Personal and Organizational Success

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Dale L. Brubaker
Larry D. Coble

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Staying on Track

For Allison and Leigh Ann

Staying on Track

An Educational Leader's Guide to Preventing Derailment and Ensuring Personal and Organizational Success

Dale L. Brubaker
Larry D. Coble

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A Sage Publications Company
Thousand Oaks, California

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For information address:

Corwin Press, Inc.
A Sage Publications Company
2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320
e-mail: order@corwin.sagepub.com

SAGE Publications Ltd.
6 Bonhill Street
London EC2A 4PU
United Kingdom

SAGE Publications India Pvt. Ltd.
M-32 Market
Greater Kailash I
New Delhi 110 048 India

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Brubaker, Dale L.
Staying on track : an educational leader's guide to preventing derailment and ensuring personal and organizational success / authors, Dale L. Brubaker, Larry D. Coble.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
ISBN 0-8039-6537-0 (cloth : acid-free paper). —
ISBN 0-8039-6538-9 (pbk. : acid-free paper)
1. School management and organization—Vocational guidance—United States. 2. School administrators—Employment—United States. 3. Career development—United States. 4. Educational leadership—United States. I. Coble, Larry D. II. Title.
LB1777.5.B78 1996
371.2'01—dc20 96-35700

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

97 98 99 00 01 02 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Production Editor:	Sherrise M. Purdum
Production Assistant:	Denise Santoyo
Typesetter/Designer:	Danielle Dillahunt
Cover Designer:	Marcia R. Finlayson

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Preface

Expectations: School board members, parents, teachers, and others look forward to a new beginning as a superintendent comes on board. A superintendent, parents, school board members, teachers, and students have high hopes when an assistant principal or principal begins his or her tenure in a school. And newly appointed educators anticipate a bright future as they sense the excitement in the air after their arrival. The expression *honeymoon period* captures the optimism of this marriage between those already in the educational setting and the newly appointed leader. And who wants to talk about possible problems during a honeymoon?

It is, however, a reality of today's society that there are widespread sociological and psychological trends that are ignored by persons and organizations at considerable risk to themselves and others. References to reforming, restructuring, and rethinking tell us that we are grasping for words that describe ferment and a more hopeful future in our schools and school systems.

It is in the midst of this age of challenge and hope that a new term has entered our vocabulary as educational leaders: *derail-*

ment (see Brubaker & Coble, 1995). This is a term that is useful in two ways: (a) to keep you, the individual, on track with your career path goals and (b) to help others in your organization, for whom you as an educational leader are responsible, to stay on track, thus minimizing the waste of organizational resources. We would do well to remind ourselves that there is always interaction between the individual and the organization. It is this transactional context that helps us see that both individuals and organizations can derail. In short, derailment has both a personal and an organizational face (Lombardo & Eichinger, 1995). Throughout this book, we will present the thesis that creative leaders use their talents to help others identify and use their talents within organizational structures (Brubaker, 1994). When this definition of creative leadership is realized, derailment can be prevented, dealt with in a constructive way to the advantage of both the person and the organization and both the school and school system.

It is obvious in talking to educational leaders in our school systems that there is a career path ladder with an accompanying reward system. The educational leader begins his or her trek with a dream: "I wonder what it would be like to be a school administrator." With the dream in mind, the potential leader enters a preservice program, usually at a university, to acquire certification. Once certification is earned, the candidate uses his or her network of friends and acquaintances to get inside information as to how to apply for and get a position as an assistant principal. After serving as an assistant principal, most educational leaders apply for a principalship. Some then move on to a central office position, in some cases an assistant superintendency. A few of these leaders apply for and are named superintendents of schools.

Our definition of educational leader derailment is concise and precise: An educator *wants* what he or she considers a better position but is not assigned the position by the powers that be. Or an educator *wants* to retain his or her present position and is demoted or dismissed. It should be clear from our definition that the educational leader's expectations are central to the concept of derailment. We make this point because of what has repeatedly happened during leadership seminars when we introduce the concept of derailment. One or more participants provoke a good

deal of discussion, indeed debate, by making comments such as the following: "When you use the term *derailment,* you are attaching moral judgments that associate higher value to higher status positions. That is, the principalship is better than the assistant principalship and the superintendency is better than the principalship. There are leaders who occupy so-called subordinate positions, they do a fine job, and they have no interest in positions held by superordinates." We agree that there are persons for whom this is true and we affirm their value. We believe, however, that the term *derailment* applies to them if it is their desire to keep their present position and are relieved of it. And if they don't want a position with higher status and pay and aren't assigned to it, we can't say they have been derailed.

Our research on educational leader derailment has led to an interesting finding: Respondents can quickly identify the major reasons why educators they know have derailed, but when asked about their own derailment, they tend to balk. Blind spots in others are easy to identify; blind spots in self are given this name because they are literally true: We don't see them in ourselves. A common response is, "Now that I have identified leadership flaws in others that have led to their derailment, I won't make the same mistakes." We have identified this as *the halo effect* (Brubaker, Simon, & Tysinger, 1993).

Because of the difficulties in *knowing thyself* and identifying our blind spots, we begin this book with a self-assessment in Chapter 1. You are asked to respond to a derailment checklist. This may serve as a pretest before you acquire a knowledge base on derailment and it may also be useful as a posttest after you have read and tried out ideas in the book. The self-assessment inventory is in two parts: Checklist A is for those of you who want to become assistant principals and those who are presently assistant principals and principals; Checklist B is for readers who are superintendents or want to become superintendents. Although there are some common items in the two inventories, the roles of principal and superintendent are sufficiently different to warrant two checklists.

Chapter 2, "What Causes Educational Leaders to Derail?," discusses ways in which you can get off track. Examples of derail-

ment have been culled from survey responses completed by assistant principals, principals, and central office leaders. We have surveyed 250 school and school system leaders across the United States, with 150 current and aspiring superintendents keeping journals yielding important information and attitudes (Brubaker & Coble, 1995). One hundred central office leaders (excluding superintendents), principals, and assistant principals were asked to answer the three following questions in writing: (a) Please keep in mind an assistant principal you know has derailed. In your opinion, what was the primary reason for his or her derailment? (b) Please keep in mind a principal who has derailed. In your opinion, what was the primary reason for his or her derailment? (c) Based on your observation of others who have derailed, what are your concerns about your own derailment potential?

The following definition of derailment was provided on the survey instrument. Assistant principal derailment: An assistant principal *who wants* a principalship does not live up to the expectations of the superintendent, the school board, or both and therefore plateaus or is assigned a lesser position. Principal derailment: A principal *who wants* a so-called better school does not live up to the expectations of the superintendent, the school board, or both and therefore plateaus or is assigned a lesser position.

You, the reader, will probably find it interesting to compare and contrast reasons why you think educators derail with causes of derailment cited by those we surveyed.

Once you have read about major causes of derailment, you will probably feel challenged to identify and implement "Antiderailment Strategies," the title of Chapter 3. This begins with an assessment of what you have already done to avoid derailment, perhaps without giving much attention to it. Strategies others have used successfully will also be discussed.

Your more general understanding of derailment strategies will be followed by "A Personal and Organizational Plan for Improvement," the subject of Chapter 4. This plan will serve as a map for avoiding derailment, dealing with it, or both. Chapter 4 places your personal development plan within the organizational context of inservice education or staff development for school and school

system administrators. We strongly believe that staff development is a promising vehicle for reaching school and school system goals. Educational leaders have to *get* at a high level in order to *give* at a high level, which is another way of saying that the learning of educational leaders is as important as the learning of students (Sarason, 1972).

It is interesting to note that superintendents acknowledge that staff development is important and yet they need considerable help in giving attention to it. A comprehensive study of Ohio superintendents' perceptions supports this conclusion: "Thirty-six percent (36%) of the superintendents indicated that 'Staff Development' was something they should be doing but didn't have time to do" (O'Callaghan, 1996, p. 130). It is our intent to provide ideas and materials that will help superintendents, other central office leaders, principals, and assistant principals meet the challenge of giving quality attention to leader staff development.

Chapter 5, "Preparing Teacher Leaders for Tomorrow's Leadership Positions," focuses on a relatively new and promising development in today's schools: shared decision making that gives teacher leaders an important role in the shaping and maintenance of school culture. We will give attention to the changing context in which educational leaders make their decisions. We will project ourselves into the future, with an eye on barometers for change—those changes in schools that tell us something about changes in the larger society (Sarason, 1996). It is the transactions between schools and other institutions in our culture that are most telling. We will argue that proper attention given to teacher leader education today will pay rich dividends tomorrow.

Before we list our references, a number of resources are included to help you deal with the derailment issue. They may be used in the following two major ways: (a) for you as an individual as you read this book and (b) for you as a staff development leader in a number of large- and small-group settings. One section of these resources is in the form of case studies, which may be thought of as the next best thing to being there. The format for these cases is as follows: A provocative case will be followed by alternative responses after which the best possible rationale for each response will be given. We will also give our opinion as to

what, in our judgment, is the best answer. You are urged to revise this format in any way that meets your creative impulses, thus making the cases your own.

Many educators were important in writing this book. A special note of appreciation is given to hundreds of students who reacted to our ideas in seminars, lectures, and classes. Thanks also go to Scott, Foresman and Company for permission to use brief excerpts from Brubaker's *Curriculum Planning: The Dynamics of Theory and Practice* (1982). Finally, Gracia A. Alkema, president of Corwin Press, Inc., has once again entered into provocative conversations with us to lead us in productive directions. She lives and loves her work—a gift to all of us.

We are interested in what you experience when you read this book. Please communicate with us at the following addresses. We promise a response.

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Prologue: A Cautionary Tale

We begin this book with a cautionary tale—a day in the life of an educational leader, the day Don found out that the board of education no longer needed or wanted his services as superintendent of schools. (Don is a composite of several superintendents we have interviewed.)

Until the past several months, Don had lived what may be described as a charmed life. Fifteen years ago, he started his first teaching job in a small high school. The first day at school, he almost instinctively did something that surprised even himself: He sat down at his desk and wrote, in large print, *Donald S. Brown, Superintendent of Schools.* Somewhat puzzled at this bold move, Don thought back to why he became an educator in the first place. He was actively involved in athletics, student government, and social activities while a student in high school. One of his coaches, who later became a superintendent, took a real interest in Don and encouraged him to become a teacher. This male superintendent was certainly a role model for Don.

Don got his first teaching job in the high school where he did his student teaching. His principal, aware of Don's interest in and potential for administration, gave him unofficial assignments

around the school that prepared him for an assistant principalship. For example, Don supervised the parking lot in the morning and after school and handled some discipline situations. After 3 years of teaching, Don was assigned an assistant principalship in a junior high school, where he served for 2 years. An elementary school principalship became open and Don, despite his reluctance to be an administrator at a level where he hadn't taught, accepted the position and was considered a quick study, with high credibility among his staff.

Two years later, the high school principal retired and Don was named the new principal. After 2 successful years on the job, Don succeeded the superintendent of schools, who took early retirement for health reasons. At this time, Don began work on his doctorate in education at a nearby university. This gave him an instant support system outside the school system and a place to express and hear ideas and feelings of administrators in similar positions. It also introduced Don to new ways of looking at leadership. He was especially interested in the *know thyself* theme within educational leadership courses. He had been largely task oriented in making his way up the ladder and had taken little time to ask questions about his inner self. He shared the following in a letter to one of his professors a few weeks after his first semester was over:

> I enjoyed your class this last semester and have been reflecting on your book and my personal and professional life. I qualify that statement with "sometimes" because you well know that this reflective stuff, especially when it relates to what's inside me, can be very uncomfortable at times. I get so intent on managing a school system and trying to get everything done that I lose sight of what's important—wanting to be where I am, and the preciousness of others and my relationships with them. One of the "curses" of my experience in administration is that I don't take much time to reflect—thank you for reminding me how vital that time is.

In doctoral study, Don was introduced to critical theory, with its emphasis on critique and the injustices society can impose on

its citizens. Mainly, Don came to understand the interactions between the inner self and context. He was surprised that some of his easy solutions to societal problems, such as "All you have to do is pull yourself up by your bootstraps," were mechanisms that supported his extreme optimism and denial of how much some people struggled to simply keep body and soul together. The gift to Don in the early stages of this transformation was that he was less judgmental and self-righteous. The challenge was that he lost some of the comfort and security that come with thinking that he could control people and situations in his own interest.

Don's 4-year stay in this system as superintendent of schools was by all accounts highly successful. His outgoing and personable leadership style gave him high scores among students, teachers, other members of the staff, parents, and members of the community. Despite a counteroffer from the school board, Don accepted a prestigious and high-paying superintendency in an urban school system in the state. He did this despite recent knowledge in doctoral study about the average tenure of urban superintendents—2.5 years (Renchler, 1992)—in contrast to the mean tenure for large and small districts combined—6.47 years (Glass, 1992).

Don was initially elated with his new assignment. A few months into the superintendency, however, he had a sense of loss about leaving his previous school system that really surprised him. In fact, he felt blindsided by this empty feeling. He discovered, in conversations with his wife and colleagues in doctoral study, that he was not alone in having this feeling after accepting a new assignment. They too went through a brief feeling of depression in their new positions. Informal discussions helped Don see that he felt this sense of emptiness for not having completed the job he started when he had promised others he would continue into a second term.

A split board had released the former superintendent at the end of his 4-year contract. Don had the full support of five of the seven board members during his first year—his honeymoon period. He was aware, however, that his position was vulnerable when two of his supporters on the board were defeated at the polls and two outspoken conservatives replaced them.

At this time, the board meetings became heated over a number of controversial issues: sex education, Site-Based Management, and the use of the high school by clubs whose agendas disturbed special interest groups in the community. Don did his best to achieve consensus on difficult issues, but one issue was not negotiable in his value system: the resegregation of the school system, something that was the result of magnet schools, the placement of new neighborhood school buildings, and the community's reluctance to engage in busing for resegregation purposes. Don was outspoken about his views on integration and desegregation in statements to the press and on television.

Don's wife and two children began to feel hostility from some members of the community, and crank phone calls in the middle of the night had his family anxious for their safety. At this time, an investigative reporter wrote a scathing article about what were claimed to be Don's questionable financial practices. The article pointed out that the superintendent placement service that the board employed, what the reporter called "headhunters," had in turn been hired by Don as consultants to align the curriculum after he became superintendent. The reporter also uncovered the fact that Don served as a consultant for this placement and consulting firm on occasion.

At this time, Don and his wife had their first encounter with the reality that "bad things can happen to good people." They experienced Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) with their third child. Until this time, Don had been "on the arc of optimism." His worth was defined in his own mind by performance-based acceptance. He felt his worth depended on his acceptance by others. He had "jumped through the hoops" or "gone over the hurdles" in a highly efficient way, with promotion following promotion. Don realized that he had been conditioned to be reactive and analytical. He didn't know how to get in touch with his feelings but instead was everything to everybody but himself.

With the convergence of the loss of a child at home and possible loss of his position as superintendent of schools in a prestigious system, Don felt he was on a downward spiral. His impulse was to work faster and harder, something that had worked to his advantage in the past. But in the process of following this impulse,

he found it difficult to focus and at times felt a kind of claustrophobia in stressful meetings. Cynicism entered his life and conversations. Before, he had talked about the necessity of risk taking and the excitement of "living on the edge." He now said on occasions, "Being a leader makes it possible for people to hate you." And he somewhat humorously said that administration is "being responsible for irresponsible people . . . who seem to be having a lot more fun than you are having." In short, Don was fatigued from overwork and conflict, and some of his basic assumptions about his leadership in particular and life in general were being seriously challenged. Don reminded himself that some of his best classes in doctoral study taught him that one of the things that happens when a person changes is that he or she feels there is an inverted world order: You start to look at things as if they are upside down.

The church Don and his family attended was assigned a minister whom Don came to respect as a pastor and friend. A message new to Don was being preached from the pulpit: You are loved for who you are, not simply what you do. Don was reminded of a leadership class in his doctoral study that made a distinction between spiritual power and political power, a point driven home by Don's reading of M. Scott Peck's *The Road Less Traveled* (1978) and Gloria Steinem's *Revolution From Within* (1992). Don's new minister repeatedly reminded the congregation that one's doing is but part of one's being, and who we are consists of many things that are not necessarily visible to others in our doing: our potential and basic assumptions about reality, for example. Don became conscious that defining our worth by simply getting the approval of others is a dead-end street; our doing is important but not all-important.

Don recognized that looking good through high standardized test scores and appearing to be a winner by bringing in grant money are not enough. Creative leadership is not getting people to do what you want them to do, regardless of whether they want to do it. Creative leadership is using your talents to help others identify and use their talents and, in the process, trying to achieve worthwhile goals and objectives. Don sensed with every fiber of his being that he was involved in a struggle that had no easy

answers—a struggle symbolized in two dreams he felt demonstrated the difference between his "old self" and his "new self."

When Don graduated from college and began his upward career ascent, he had a dream that grew out of his experiences living in a three-bedroom, one-bathroom house as a child. He described this bathroom as never having a cold seat because his mother, father, brother, sister and grandmother always seemed to be in the bathroom when he needed to use it. Grandma was a special problem as she liked to take hour-long baths. Don's dream was that he had just built a beautiful five-bedroom, three-bath house in the suburbs and was now challenged to find the very best furniture, carpeting, and so on to furnish the place. Don loved this dream, had it repeatedly, and shared it with those close to him who found it quite amusing in the telling—especially because Don and his family now had such a house in his second superintendency.

Don's new dream, which he had only had two or three times, was far less romantic and in fact disquieting. He dreamed that their two children had left home and he and his wife had purchased a smaller house that had already been owned by other occupants. The home was messy and no matter how much Don and his wife tried to make the house like a new home, they couldn't turn it into a perfectly clean new house with everything in its proper place. Don and his wife laughed about these two dreams and how their efforts to control everything with their lives in general and their children in particular simply hadn't worked. Given the depression both Don and his wife were experiencing at this time in their lives, they humorously referred to themselves as "Numb and Dumber." (In fact, seeing the humorous side of things made them understand that they were slowly working themselves out of this state of depression.)

And so, it is with this background in mind that we return to the day when Don received word that his services as superintendent of schools were no longer needed. Actually, receiving word wasn't exactly how it happened. Following the scathing article, along with staff and community knowledge of the increasingly strained relationship emerging between Don and his board, rumors of Don's impending firing began to circulate—first among

staff and then in isolated pockets of the community. As it turned out, Don's opposition on the board had been talking out-of-school about their views that the superintendent was going to have to go. Had it not been for a call-in radio talk show, Don would have been totally blindsided. However, when a telephone guest inquired as to the truth of the rumor that the superintendent was going to be fired, Don's phone rang off the hook for the next hour and a half.

Fifteen minutes into the frenzy of calls, Don summoned one of his two most trusted staff members, Margaret Kahn. Margaret said that she had heard rumblings among some top staff a few days earlier, but had completely dismissed them as rumors. She indicated that due to all the stress Don was undergoing on the job, she simply saw no need to burden him with what she was certain was a rumor. Now they both knew that with this much smoke, there had to be a fire somewhere.

Don didn't have to wait long. Shortly before noon, Don received a call from his very supportive board chair who appeared to be devastated. Jim Fick had just been told by one of Don's enemies on the board that he had acquired enough support in the last week to not only not renew Don's contract but also to buy out his final year. Furthermore, the enemy requested an executive session for Thursday night, just 2 days away, to discuss this with the entire board.

The rest is history. What followed was a Thursday night executive session of the board in which three of Don's seven board members couldn't believe their ears about the criticism of Don's work and three were in such an emotional state that they would have written personal checks to get the superintendent out. The seventh board member could have gone either way, but with her political support base tied to Don's nonsupporters, and with this being an election year, she cast her vote to terminate. Don was called into executive session and advised that in a few minutes the board would go into public session and place him on administrative leave until the details of his contract buyout could be worked out.

Don was told to remove his personal belongings by 5 o'clock the next day. Talk of legal fees, emotional wars, and staff, family, and community unrest proliferated the area all day Friday and over

the weekend. Sunday's newspaper headline read "School Board Fires Superintendent." The amazing but predictable postfiring discussions never included anything about Don's alleged incompetence as a practicing administrator. Emotions ran high, however, when his views on maintaining racially integrated schools entered the discussion. The community split on this issue, and Don's value system left him without a job and he and his family in emotional upheaval. (Rarely does an intellectual issue lead to derailment in the superintendency; however, emotional and political conditions usually expedite the process.)

Don and his wife had such mixed feelings when the dust settled and they entered the buyout year. They appreciated those loyal friends who had supported them through one of the most difficult times in their lives and they remained angry at those who had wanted Don's termination. Losing the job was for Don like the death of a friend. He didn't know how to grieve. His relationship with his minister was helpful and this friend, realizing the extent of Don's depression, helped him get help from a professional therapist, a counseling psychologist. Fortunately, Don had maintained his health coverage as part of termination negotiations. During this time, it crossed Don's mind that he might have to leave home for a brief period of time to have around-the-clock psychological support, but this didn't come to pass. His therapist helped Don see that he had developed coping skills during the past few years that in fact kept him from making real and necessary changes in his life. Don recognized that he occasionally had the "false flu," and allergy attacks became more and more prevalent. On occasion, he would be bedridden for two or three afternoons a week.

During this year, Don realized that completing his doctoral program was a godsend. It gave him structure, a goal, and a support network of professors and students. Most important, it gave him an arena away from his former school system in which he could be successful. The buyout year was a year of reflections and action, a year during which Don and his family could decide what to do next.

The story of Don's derailment raises several questions that may stimulate discussion:

1. What mistakes did Don make and what would you have done to avoid these mistakes? (We refer to this as the *personal face* of derailment.)
2. What did you respect or admire about Don's decision making in this career path story and why?
3. What mistakes did the school system make in relating to Don and what would you have done to avoid these mistakes? (We refer to this as the *organizational face* of derailment.)
4. What did you respect or admire about those in the school system, including board members, as they related to Don in this narrative and why?
5. What vocational options are now open to Don and what advice would you give him and why?

Your answers to these questions make it clear why we introduced this section by calling it a cautionary tale: Staying on track is an important goal for the person (in this case, Don), for others, and for the organization as a whole. The educational leader who proceeds with caution must be alert and prudent. It is our aim in this book to help you develop these qualities of leadership.

1

Self-Assessment Checklists

The first thing to recognize about the importance of self-assessment is that a person does not operate in reality but instead operates on the basis of his or her map of reality. Someone said that King George III was out of his head, to which a wag responded, "But it's the only head he has."

Second, what a person chooses to exclude from his or her map of reality is as important as what is included. We call this *negative affirmation:* We affirm the goodness of a limited number of choices by narrowing the universe of possible choices. An example of this is one we have all experienced. It is late Sunday evening and we are returning from a vacation, anxious about going to work the next day. We stop at the nearest supermarket, one we have never been in before in our lives. We quickly make our way around the store to pick up a select number of items, such as bread, milk, and cereal. We are able to do this efficiently because our map of the territory tells us what not to look for in various parts of the supermarket. We also know where to look for items that we desire. A conceptual framework based on past experiences serves as a map for negotiating the territory.

Third, only when we are open to change in our map of reality can we decrease our chances of derailment. In the process, we celebrate those parts of our map that have worked for us in avoiding derailment. In other words, change and conservation go hand in hand.

The following checklists will help each of us identify behaviors that often lead to derailment. *Checklist A* is for readers who want to become assistant principals and those who are presently assistant principals and principals.

Checklist B is for those who are superintendents and those who aspire to the superintendency. Please check those behaviors that you perceive as existing in your educational leadership. Items checked are those you will especially need to give attention to in order to avoid derailment. Also, please check statements with which you agree. Leave blank those statements with which you disagree. Checklist items are organized according to major themes.

Checklist A

Assistant Principalship and Principalship

1. Incompetence: not equipped to carry out major role functions
   - _____ 1.1. I find it difficult to take the initiative and prefer to be directed by someone else.
   - _____ 1.2. I often feel indecisive.
   - _____ 1.3. I have good intentions but poor organizational skills.
   - _____ 1.4. Follow through is a problem for me. I am often given assignments that I fail to complete.
   - _____ 1.5. I often look good but fear that I have little depth or substance.
   - _____ 1.6. I have difficulties with the "table manners of leadership"—such as entrance rituals that relax and welcome people and exit rituals that leave visitors with a good feeling after being with me. Civilities are not my strong suit.

_____ 1.7. I worry about being articulate in general and am afraid that I sometimes use poor English.

_____ 1.8. I want as much "life space"as possible and will spend as little time as possible in the school to which I am assigned.

_____ 1.9. I may well have a difficult time making and implementing tough decisions. Disciplining students may be my Achilles heel.

_____1.10. I am not comfortable with instructional technology in general and computers in particular. I will simply find ways around this lack of knowledge.

2. External Political Conflict: difficulties in relating to people and organizations outside my school

_____ 2.1. Nonalignment with the philosophy of my superordinate(s) may well be a major problem for me.

_____ 2.2. I tend to be outspoken and political to the point where it may get me in trouble with superordinates.

_____ 2.3. I sometimes come across as too self-confident and opinionated, which some people read as my being an authority on everything.

_____ 2.4. I am knowledgeable and not afraid to show it, which may make my superordinates look out-of-date.

_____ 2.5. I take things personally and sometimes talk about my school in a negative way outside the school.

_____ 2.6. If warranted, I will criticize central office staff in public.

_____ 2.7. If things go wrong in my school, my superordinates should take the heat. After all, this is what they are paid for.

_____ 2.8. I have no interest in nor will I participate in "good ol' boy games"—like going to lunch, attending football and basketball games, going out for drinks after the games, and so on.

_____ 2.9. It will be in my interest to invest time and money in the reelection campaigns of school board members.

_____ 2.10. I will do a good job in my school, but spending time getting to know and participate in the culture of the community is a waste of my resources.

_____ 2.11. I am ill prepared to relate to the teachers' union.

_____ 2.12. Standardized test scores are of little interest to me and I will give little, if any, attention to them.

_____ 2.13. I tend to be indiscreet about privileged information.

_____ 2.14. The way I dress is my business and quite frankly none of the business of my superordinates.

3. Internal Political Conflict: difficulties within the school

_____ 3.1. Credibility with my superordinates is all-important. My teaching staff didn't appoint me and they won't fire me.

_____ 3.2. I am willing to take an unpopular position on a controversial issue even if my staff doesn't support this position.

_____ 3.3. There are times when my staff in general and advisory council in particular will want me to support a position I don't agree with, but I probably won't do so and I will be irate if they go over my head.

_____ 3.4. Although my staff may be disturbed by my establishing a political base outside the school, I will do so to get promoted.

_____ 3.5. High test scores are the key to upward mobility and I will do whatever it takes, short of cheating, to get them up.

4. Difficulties With Leadership Processes: poor judgments at critical times

_____ 4.1. I have difficulties in formulating and projecting vision for our school.

_____ 4.2. Faculty deliver when they are afraid. All of this positive reinforcement stuff simply pampers them at the expense of a well-organized school.

_____ 4.3. It is inevitable that a leader plays favorites. It goes with the territory.

_____ 4.4. Involving faculty in school decision making is a waste of time. The principal is in charge of the school and shouldn't have his or her power eroded.

_____ 4.5. Communication skills are of little importance if you simply do your job. Staff members know what they are expected to do without my communicating my expectations to them.

_____ 4.6. Reading people well is not part of the principal's job description and is highly overrated. The assignment of people to leadership positions is a low-level priority.

_____ 4.7. You can't make changes too fast. A job needs to be done and done quickly, so do it.

_____ 4.8. Teachers don't need the involvement of principals in classrooms.

5. Diminished Desire to Learn and Improve

_____ 5.1. Once you get to know the job, you should give your resources to it rather than attending staff development workshops. You really can (and should) do the job at this point on automatic pilot.

_____ 5.2. There is nothing wrong with being more interested in retiring than learning. After all, I have paid my dues and others can now pay their dues.

_____ 5.3. I know that I frequently behave in such a way that I send to others the message, "I don't want to be there."

6. Legal and/or Moral Problems

_____ 6.1. As I look around me, I find little evidence that assistant principals and principals can be derailed for legal and moral problems.

_____ 6.2. An assistant principal or a principal should do a good job and give little attention to legal and

moral issues, because they will take care of themselves.

7. Personal Reasons

____ 7.1. Personal reasons for derailment are of little consequence for me. They are simply not likely to be an important consideration.

____ 7.2. The way to get ahead is to get a doctorate. After getting this so-called union card, it will be easy to find better employment. It is simply not necessary to push my present employer to save my present position for me upon my return from doctoral study.

____ 7.3. The school system where I am presently employed will not do anything illegal with regard to my being reassigned when I return from personal leave. There is no need for any kind of paperwork with regard to this matter.

Checklist B

The Superintendency

1. Strategic Differences With Management

____ 1.1. People are people and school board members are school board members. If I have a good personal relationship with them, political matters will play a secondary role.

____ 1.2. As superintendent of schools, positional authority rests with me. Sources of power, such as expertise, charisma, and succorance, are overrated. It is still true that the head of the organization can accomplish what needs to be accomplished. Followers respect a leader who has an agenda and isn't afraid to push it.

____ 1.3. The way to deal with the media is to try to avoid them—especially television.

_____ 1.4. Some people say that today's organizations have to be more open to public scrutiny. However, the smart superintendent, the kind I respect, gives out information on a need-to-know basis.

_____ 1.5. The power of the religious Right is highly overrated as to influencing local boards of education.

2. Problems With Interpersonal Relationships

_____ 2.1. Superintendents who have demonstrated their intelligence with good grades, particularly during graduate study, are likely to be good at interpersonal relations.

_____ 2.2. Some people use the term *micromanagement* in a disparaging way; but to keep people in line with your vision and be sure that they do quality work, you have to check on their progress or they will tend to slack off.

_____ 2.3. Interpersonal relationships are important but highly overrated in gauging the effectiveness of superintendents. The important thing to note is that the effective superintendent is task oriented and gets the job done efficiently.

3. Difficulty in Making Strategic Transitions

_____ 3.1. Some people say that there are defining moments or critical incidents that make a real difference in superintendent effectiveness. But in fact, this is not true. The superintendency consists of one undramatic moment after another. It is your staff's job to know this and efficiently carry out their day-to-day tasks in a predictable way.

4. Difficulty in Molding a Staff

_____ 4.1. The best way to relate to a member of your staff who was a candidate for the superintendency is to forget the past, don't discuss this matter with him or her, and go about your business.

____ 4.2. The work of an organization is done through its formal structure. The key to your success as a superintendent is to use this formal structure to your advantage.

____ 4.3. A superintendent is wise to put aside any fears related to the role of leader. Hard work is its own reward because you don't have to think about yourself or the *know thyself* philosophy you hear about in higher education.

____ 4.4. My inclination is to monitor staff in getting the job done. Why fake it and pretend I am someone I am not? I'll be authentic even if a few criticize me for looking over their shoulder.

5. Lack of Follow-Through

____ 5.1. Follow-through is often overrated. What is important is to highly motivate people and trust them. Then follow-through won't be a problem.

____ 5.2. Paperwork and other scut work forced on the superintendent from the State Department of Public Instruction and others will always be overwhelming. The trick is to identify those assignments that are meaningless and then simply don't do them.

____ 5.3. Staff members don't have to be part of a team to get scut work done. In fact, they tend to waste too much time talking to each other when they are close together. Simply give them their assignments and try to put them in autonomous workstations to get their work done.

6. Overdependence

____ 6.1. The board of education must be pleased or you won't survive as a superintendent. Some may call it overdependence but, in fact, the effective superintendent knows that the board is calling the shots.

_____ 6.2. Boards of education understand that it is the responsibility of the superintendent to make personnel decisions that they rubber-stamp.

In the following chapter, we will use the checklists you have responded to in this chapter as an outline for our discussion of the major causes of educational leader derailment. We urge you to return to your responses to the checklist so that each of your answers is placed in larger context. In fact, you may wish to photocopy your self-assessment responses so that you can place them side by side with the outline for discussion in the next chapter.

2

What Causes Educational Leaders to Derail?

As mentioned at the end of the previous chapter, the present chapter is organized according to the two self-assessment checklists you recently completed. Checklist A included items for readers who either want to become or are assistant principals and principals. Checklist B contained items for educational leaders who aspire to the superintendency or presently hold this position.

Causes of Assistant Principal and Principal Derailment

In surveying assistant principals, principals, and central office leaders, we were surprised at the degree of uniformity in their responses as to the causes of assistant principal and principal derailment. We have categorized these responses in descending order of frequency as follows: (a) incompetence, (b) external political conflict, (c) internal political conflict, (d) difficulties with leadership processes, (e) diminished desire to learn and improve, (f) legal and /or moral problems, and (g) personal reasons.

Incompetence was defined succinctly by one respondent as "not equipped to carry out major role functions." Occasionally, a person assigned to an administrative position fails to take the initiative and instead wants to be directed by someone else. This assistant principal or principal seems to have backed into the position, wants the perks and salary, but simply fails to assume the role of leader. So-called good ol' boy principals, for example, have traditionally expected a lead teacher to provide leadership in the areas of curriculum and instruction (Brubaker, 1995). Indecisiveness leaves followers with the feeling that things won't be done or won't be done well. As Father Theodore Martin Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame from 1951 to 1987, said, "The very essence of leadership is you have to have a vision. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet" (Austin & Brubaker, 1988, p. 104). Dennis Moser, a third-year principal, adds, "Being the leader in a community means being willing to be the torch bearer, to be the one keeping the fire going" (Moser, 1996, p. 17).

It is also interesting, with regard to a principal's leadership in curriculum and instruction, that he or she may overrate his or her leadership in such matters. Barnett Berry, a professor at the University of South Carolina, surveyed 150 principals and 900 North Carolina Teaching Fellows who had graduated from their respective institutions of higher education. North Carolina's Teaching Fellows receive complete funding for their 4 years of higher education in exchange for a 4-year teaching commitment after graduation. "More than 90 percent of the 150 principals surveyed said they talk about instruction frequently with their teachers. But only 43 percent of the Teaching Fellows thought they had frequent discussions with their principals about instruction" (Simmons, 1995, p. 1). This survey also found that "only 43 percent of the Fellows felt they could influence curriculum—the heart of any classroom education. Almost 80 percent of the principals, however, said teachers influence curriculum" (Simmons, p. 1). This once again supports the power of the halo effect: Principals feel they are more competent than others; or, as in this case, the best and the brightest of beginning teachers think such principals are.

Another sign of incompetence, according to several respondents, is the lack of organizational skills. Problems with follow-

through were frequently cited: "He was all talk and no action. He didn't meet superordinates' time lines and was always late in handing in reports. He dressed well but had no substance. We referred to him as 'the empty suit.' "

Administrators who are long in marketing themselves and their schools but short in delivering on their promises are suspect: "Ordinary schools are busy convincing themselves and others how excellent they are; great schools know that they are not as good as they can be " (Glickman, 1990, p. 68).

Some assistant principals and principals show their incompetence by not having the so-called table manners of leadership (Brubaker, 1994, p. 103). "People are not relaxed around our principal because he is brusque and bullies faculty. He doesn't know how to greet people and see them out of the school with a good feeling. He uses poor English, which sets a bad example for the staff and children."

A fairly common criticism of some principals is that they simply aren't in the building enough. "We have a 10-minute principal," an assistant principal relates. She adds, "He is here for 5 minutes each morning to greet the students and 5 minutes each afternoon when they get on the buses." Some assistant principals and principals look for any excuse to be somewhere between the school and the central office.

Occasionally, a principal or assistant principal is perceived to not be tough enough to handle difficult situations. "We have some rough discipline situations in this school," a principal related, "and the assistant principal doesn't project the strength to maintain discipline." It should be added that schools vary with regard to degree of toughness.

A sure sign of incompetence these days is an administrator's lack of knowledge about technology in general and computers in particular. Fifty percent of Ohio superintendents surveyed in early 1996 indicated that it is extremely important that students be provided access to up-to-date computers and other scientific technology (O'Callaghan, 1996, p. 78).

External political conflict was defined by respondents as difficulty in relating to people and organizations outside the school.

During his interview, Fran Nolan (January 1996) looked back at his early experience as an assistant principal:

> I simply didn't know how attentive a leader has to be to politics. I hid behind moralisms and didn't realize until I had power that you don't have it. That is, you have to trade fragments to the point where you can't keep score: "Who do I owe what?"

Nonalignment with the philosophy of superordinate(s) was cited by several respondents as a major cause of derailment. An experienced principal describes difficulties in adjusting to a new superintendent and board of education after a merger: "*In this new system, a principal is only one bad decision away from derailment.* I appeared not to fit in because I had reservations about new leaders' vision for my school and the school system." If this principal is outspoken and considered to be too political, he will be in trouble with his superordinates. If he is articulate, he may come across as arrogant. And, if he is knowledgeable and not afraid to show it, he may well make his superordinates look out-of-date. He will cross the line into insubordination if he publicly criticizes the direction in which his school, the school system, or both are moving.

It is important that an assistant principal or principal accepts responsibility or takes the heat when things go wrong in the school. This may even mean that the school administrator will take the blame for errors made by his or her superordinates on occasion. This is one reason why assistant principals and principals describe themselves as "leaders in the middle."

It is common knowledge that some presidential candidates will choose less qualified vice presidential candidates simply because they feel more comfortable around them. Who wants to spend a lot of time with someone who makes you nervous? One way in which assistant principals and principals establish an affinity connection with their superordinates is to go to lunch, athletic contests, and the like, after which they have drinks together. Engagement in these activities has commonly been a source of

power for good ol' boy administrators who share the so-called macho ethic (Brubaker, 1995). A principal described a colleague in a rural system who failed to participate in these activities: "He didn't play the good ol' boy game. He was more interested in poetry than in sports. He cared about others and was really different from most administrators in the system."

Some principals in the same rural system appeared to be more like politicians than educators. They routinely invested money in the political campaigns of school board candidates. If their candidates won, they were given special access; but if they lost, they were punished. One principal consistently invested in opposing candidates' campaigns to hedge his bets.

Assistant principals and principals who fail to be in touch with the community outside the school risk a good deal. A survey of Ohio superintendents indicates that 53% of them believed it was extremely important to broadly engage the community in support of the schools, and 52% thought it extremely important to create partnerships with parents in educating their children (O'Callaghan, 1996, p. 78).

Respondents in the Midwest and Northeast cited difficulties in relation to the teachers' union as a potential source of derailment. They felt ill prepared by their administrator preparation courses to deal with such matters.

Most superintendents are sensitive to schools with low test scores in this age of accountability. In many systems, such scores are published in newspapers, and real estate agents use schools with high test scores as a way of directing potential buyers to a particular area of the school system and away from other areas.

One of the first things an assistant principal and principal learn is that "You have to watch what you say to whom." One must be sensitive to privileged information, and a lack of such sensitivity may quickly lead to derailment.

Finally, some superintendents give special attention to the dress of assistant principals and principals. A professional image is valued and informal dress is considered inappropriate (Greene & Bentley, 1987). At the same time, some teachers, particularly in elementary schools and middle schools, want assistant principals

and principals to participate in activities with children that call for informal attire. Once again, assistant principals and principals are persons in the middle.

Internal political conflict refers to difficulties of a political nature within the school. One of the real-life contradictions faced by the assistant principal and principal is that credibility with superordinates and school staff is extremely important and yet it is impossible to please both parties when some decisions are made. Some staff members will expect you to represent their view to central office leaders even when you disagree with such views. Central office leaders will in turn expect you to implement controversial positions that will erode your credibility with school staff members. In the event that you don't represent your staff to the central office, their representatives in this age of shared decision making and flattened organizations may well go over your head to the central office and even to school board members. This occurred in an elementary school when teachers in one wing of the building didn't have adequate heat despite maintenance workers' efforts to rectify the problem. The Site-Based Management Leadership Team sent tersely written memos to the superintendent and school board members, voicing their complaint. The principal and superintendent were outraged. The leadership team said that they were simply acting out site-based management rhetoric.

The assistant principal and principal interested in upward mobility face another contradiction. They will need a political support base outside the school in order to be promoted, but if they are too obvious in establishing such a base, they will look more interested in their next position than in their present one. If you are involved in upward mobility moves, you will need to know how the school system pecking order works. At the same time, you want to create community within your school. Dennis Moser (1996) describes the challenge,

> Students, teachers, parents, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, office staff, maintenance people, central maintenance people—all people associated with a particular school—need to feel ownership, commitment, and acceptance at a school.

> The connection ought to be non-conditional. You are connected because you are. (p. 11)

The trick is to be aware of pecking orders without reinforcing them. In fact, you will need to choose your battles carefully to challenge these power structures. Assignment of parking spaces, names and titles on doors and other conspicuous places, and introductions to staff members at meetings of parents are especially sensitive matters facing the assistant principal and principal.

Attention to test scores can be as important internally as externally. A respondent calls our attention to this: "Our principal was so consumed with gaining district reputation with high test scores that she lost the support of the faculty who felt she had set aside the school's child-centered orientations."

In short, the principal's credibility within the school depends on technical proficiency—the ability to do well what has become known as administrivia, such as scheduling—but such proficiency, even though it affords security, is not enough in itself because it doesn't assure connection. Moser (1996) speaks to this, "Connection and community have everything to do with tone and theme and human value and motivational and internal body clocks that wake us ready and willing for another day and another challenge" (p. 10).

Difficulties with leadership processes refers to poor judgments by assistant principals and principals at critical times. As indicated earlier, the formulation and projection of a school vision leaves followers with the feeling that the leader has a sense of direction and knows what he or she is doing. One of the messages sent when a leader has and shares school vision is that there is something more important than satisfying the leader's ego needs. The opposite message is conveyed when the assistant principal or principal instills fear in the staff. Paranoia and a lack of trust are usually associated with such leadership. A few critical incidents or defining moments in a school's history symbolize such leadership-gone-wrong. An elementary school principal was fed up with a number of problems that surfaced during the first few months of school. The pest control people had to be called in to kill bugs attracted to the remnants of food eaten in classrooms. A few

teachers openly challenged the principal during the most recent faculty meeting and the principal overheard criticism of him when he entered the teachers' lounge. A week before Christmas, this principal went home and made a pitcher full of martinis. He then sat down at his word processor and began typing a memo to the faculty, knowing full well that this venting exercise would never actually be distributed to them. After a second drink, he finished the following memo.

December 18, 1995

To: The Faculty

From: The Principal

Re: Procedural Changes in the School

It has come to my attention that there are several matters that need to be addressed before our vacation begins. We have needlessly had to use part of our budget to bring in pest controllers because *some* of you have had food in your classrooms.

I know that you are stressed out because of the holiday season. You have presents to buy, food to prepare, and guests to entertain. However, *your problems at home must not create problems at school.* The faculty lounge has become a den of destructive criticism—a morale breaker for all concerned.

The following procedural changes will take place immediately:

1. No food will be allowed in classrooms. Food will be eaten only in the cafeteria.
2. Faculty members will use the faculty lounge one at a time.
3. Problems from home will not be the subject of conversations at school.

Have a good holiday!

The next day, the principal inadvertently took this memo to school on top of a stack of papers. His secretary, relatively new to the job, photocopied and placed the memo in faculty mailboxes. As happens in such matters, faculty members have creative and often humorous ways of naming such critical events. In this case the memo became known as "The Christmas Edict."

Paranoia, a word commonly used by followers to refer to a distraught leader, can sometimes cause the assistant principal or principal to retreat to an area or activity that can be absolutely controlled. Respondents describe this in a number of ways:

> Our assistant principal in the high school simply had no people skills. He saw faculty decision making as a threat to his control. He was authoritarian and rigid. He began spending almost all of his time at his computer keyboard. Evidently, the principal was relieved not to have him wandering around the building blowing up at people and so he was left alone.

The playing of favorites among faculty and staff can be another way of losing credibility with them. In effect, the leader creates an in-group and an out-group. Honorifics, the giving of awards such as Teacher of the Year, is another especially sensitive issue facing the assistant principal and principal.

Time and again, we heard about poor communication skills that worked to the detriment of the administrator and the school at critical times in its history. Teachers' roles are always negotiable to some extent, but they want to know what their leaders expect of them. It affords security even if they disagree with such expectations: "I care enough about you to give attention to your role in this school." Dennis Moser (1996) provides us with insights about the significance of communication between the leader and followers:

> Creation of community means attention to people first, listening to the human concerns, acknowledging the emotion, the feel, and then taking action on something specific

> later. Sometimes people expect and need no action at all. They just want to be heard.

He adds,

> We administrators sometimes make the mistake of trying to fix, trying to be too efficient, too active. People often just want to get the feel of what sort of priority an issue is for the leader, not that anything is actually going to change right now or be done, but just to be heard. Teachers say to me over and over, "I just needed to talk." (p. 13)

Assistant principals and principals are sometimes derailed because of their inability to read people well. The wrong person is assigned to a leadership position and fails. Poor personnel decisions, including hiring, can also leave people with the impression that the leader doesn't know what he or she is doing. High-visibility assignments are a mixed blessing.

Occasionally, one meets a newly appointed assistant principal or principal who is overanxious and makes changes too fast. The problem is compounded when he or she refers to self as a "a change agent," thus implying that others must change but he or she is not expected to do so. Followers react angrily if ignoring the leader's manic actions doesn't work.

Finally, a common complaint against some assistant principals and principals is that they spend little, if any, time in classrooms. An assistant principal comments:

> I shouldn't say this but teachers in our school refer to the principal as "The Ghost." He simply doesn't spend any time in classrooms but assigns all evaluation to assistant principals. His excuse is that he simply doesn't have time but I suspect that he wouldn't know how to talk about curriculum and instruction even if he wanted to do so.

"Diminished desire to learn and improve" is another category for items relating to potential derailment of assistant principals

and principals. Some leaders generally fail to avail themselves of opportunities to learn, as evidenced by the fact that they don't attend staff development sessions, or if they do, they act as if they are on automatic pilot.

Respondents cite a few assistant principals and principals who act as if they are more interested in retirement than in learning. One person in a leadership position held up three fingers every time he was frustrated. It symbolized the fact that he had 3 years until retirement. A respondent described such a leader by observing, "He acted like he didn't want to be here."

We will argue in the final chapter of this book that it is the educational leader's desire to make sense of the world around him or her and what he or she experiences that makes a major difference in the quality of leadership given to the setting.

Legal and/or moral problems are occasionally cited by respondents as reasons for derailment. A few assistant principals and principals are fired for criminal acts in violation of the public trust. These violations receive prominent headlines in local newspapers and are featured on the television news. Respondents cited the following as examples of legal problems: shooting a man in a nightclub, decorating his house with artwork paid for with the PTA and state funds, shoplifting in a store, arrested on morals charges involving a minor, and misappropriation of funds.

Although legal issues are often dramatic and clear-cut, moral issues are more subtle and difficult to analyze. One of the difficulties with moral assertions is that the person making them can leave others with the impression that "I am better than you." At the same time, assistant principals and principals are challenged to hold themselves to a high standard of behavior. Case studies in Resource H focus on moral issues and we urge you to read and discuss them at some length.

Personal reasons are sometimes mentioned as reasons for derailment. A woman may leave an administrative position to have a baby and decide not to return as an assistant principal or principal, according to one respondent. Family problems are also cited as reasons for leaving an administrative post. On occasion, an assistant principal or principal will take a year's leave to pursue a graduate degree, only to find that his or her position has

been taken by someone else and other similar positions are not available.

Causes of Superintendent Derailment

Several studies in recent years have given attention to the increasingly high turnover rate of superintendents (Brubaker & Coble, 1995; Brubaker & Shelton, 1995; Hood, 1996). Hoyle (1988) predicted a 40% to 50% turnover rate by the year 2005 due to several factors, including retirement and derailment. Derailment of superintendents of schools is especially acute in our urban areas.

In an effort to identify and understand causes for derailment, we read the journals of 150 current and aspiring superintendents across the United States who attended leadership seminars sponsored by the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) in Greensboro, North Carolina. We also reviewed related research and writing on the subject of superintendent turnover.

As with the derailment of assistant principals and principals, superintendents' perceptions as to why they left their positions vary to some extent compared to perceptions held by direct reports—those in positions close to superintendents (Hood, 1996). Variance can once again be attributed to the halo effect. That is, superintendents tended to see themselves victimized by outside forces, whereas direct reports were more critical of superintendents' leadership and located greater blame in the actions of such superintendents. However, there was more commonality between the perceptions of superintendents and direct reports than we thought we would find. It is therefore accurate and useful to identify the following six categories of responses for superintendent derailment, in descending order of frequency: (a) strategic differences with management, (b) problems with interpersonal relationships, (c) making strategic transitions, (d) difficulty in molding a staff, (e) lack of follow-through, and (f) overdependence. (We hold the view that the degree of frequency on these matters is less important than the usefulness of categories and examples

in stimulating thinking and discussion so that those interested in the cost of derailment can limit its occurrence.)

Strategic differences with management means in effect strategic differences with the board of education. This comes as not a great surprise at a time when people want an active role in government, not simply representation by government. In concrete terms, this means that school board members are often emissaries of special interest groups. They have definite agendas to advance and axes to grind. The result: Intent on their own agendas, these school board members tend to micromanage school systems; they often can't see the big picture and they don't grasp how roles of administrators and board members should differ (Brubaker & Shelton, 1995).

Because of the power special interest groups hold over board members (and all politicians), today's leaders—unlike those of yesteryear—can't simply use their authority to elicit what they consider desirable actions from others. Instead, superintendents who are going to be effective in the age of the disposable superintendent must know how to use other sources of power, such as expertise, charisma, and succor. Think of expertise as the ability to articulate ideas, charisma as the ability to attract and keep attention, and succor as the ability to counsel and coach others (Brubaker & Shelton, 1995). Some superintendents have made the transition in using nonauthoritarian sources of power in relating to board members, but others have not.

Superintendents and their management team members may say and do things that are no longer confined to one community. Think of the Alabama high school principal who had what allegedly were his views on interracial dating at an end-of-year prom—reportedly expressed during a school assembly—beamed throughout the world (Brubaker & Shelton, 1995). It is inevitable in dealing with such a volatile situation that the superintendent will be more vulnerable to disagreements with board members, and such disagreements will be immediately visible to the public because of television news.

Regardless of the wishes of superintendents and board members, organizations have become more open in letter and in spirit. The public demands this. The prominence of special interest groups,

such as the religious Right, has forced superintendents to either adjust or leave. Actions within the board represent vocal advocates who use their internal and external networks to push their agendas. In some systems, disgruntled principals, who have themselves derailed, become school board members with one important agenda item in mind: Get rid of the superintendent.

Problems with interpersonal relationships are a major cause of superintendent derailment. McCall, Lombardo, and Morrison (1988) quote a college graduate, who dramatically describes the shift from the culture of higher education to the culture of the work world and its demands on leaders:

> In college I used my intellectual skills to get good grades by knowing the right answers. But at work, I found out that knowing the right answer was only 10 percent of the battle. Working with people was the other 90 percent. And we hadn't learned that at school. (p. 22)

Lack of communication and poor communication are repeatedly cited by people dissatisfied with a superintendent's leadership. Direct reports especially associate these difficulties with superintendents who can't seem to help themselves from micromanaging others. Rather than delegating tasks and giving staff the appropriate freedom to accomplish those tasks within a given time frame, the micromanaging superintendent is always in the face of those he or she has asked to do the task.

Though some hardy souls in the central office might be confident enough to confront this behavior and tactfully make their views known, the micromanaging superintendent will likely take a dim view of such "noise in the system." In short, the micromanaging superintendent simply communicates a lack of trust in the abilities of others to do their work. Micromanagers also tend to focus on too many matters at once, thereby squandering their resources.

Difficulty in making strategic transitions is another major cause of superintendent derailment. A dramatic example of this occurs when the board of education makes an abrupt change in its membership. In one school system, a board that traditionally

had African American representation for its large minority population lost this representation at election time. The newly appointed superintendent faced a board that had some members with notoriously racist attitudes. She also faced outspoken leaders in the African American community. Her solution: The superintendent created a high-level advisory group of African American leaders in the community who worked directly with her. At the same time, she made efforts to create consolidated support among board members to shape an agenda that wouldn't bring harm to any students in the school system. These efforts made some difference, but after 2 years in office, she resigned to take a university position. She saw a system that was resegregating itself and knew that her choice was between self-derailment and derailment by the board.

Another superintendent saw the composition of the school board swing from liberal to conservative right before his eyes. The new board viewed site-based management as a left-wing plot, and the struggling superintendent finally resigned in despair after losing his credibility with the new locus of power in the community.

Difficulty in molding a staff can force a superintendent to derail. A newly appointed superintendent may well find one or more high-level staff members who are not very happy about the new appointment. In fact, one of these leaders may have been a candidate for the position. A young superintendent shared his strategy for dealing with this situation:

> I made it a point to talk to my assistant superintendent, who was in the running for the job I got. I said to him that we should be able to share in an honest way how we felt about things, air these ideas, and then move on with our jobs in the interest of having a smoothly running system. He thanked me for making this overture and being so honest about it at the front end. With time, we not only had a good working relationship but also became friends.

A second superintendent told us a story about his entrance into a large rural system that had a less than happy ending:

> It became clear to me when I was on the job for a week or two, that nepotism was rampant in this system and indeed in the state. Some central office leaders were related and principals and assistant principals were part of the same inbred system. I took a stand early in my appointment that the best qualified person for the job would be hired. In fact, I said this in my interviews with the press and television newspeople. Malcontents turned to the deputy superintendent, a former candidate for the job I received, and thwarted me at every turn of the road. After 2 years of this harassment, it was obvious to me that I didn't have the power base to continue leading. Under pressure from the board, I resigned.

Hardworking and effective central office leaders, principals, and assistant principals are often offended by newly appointed superintendents who leave them with the feeling that the system has no history or no history of any value. Newly appointed superintendents can become so absorbed in their plans for the system's future that they make no effort to understand its history and culture. It is as if they have arrived at a party several hours late but act like it has just begun. A director of instruction shared with us her experience on this matter:

> At the first meeting of the year with his central office staff, the new superintendent stood in front of us and said, "Welcome aboard!" I turned to a friend and said, "I thought it was our ship." The superintendent then said, "I've been told that there have been some serious problems in this system before I came. I want to put all of that behind us and don't want to hear anything more about them." After this meeting, my friend said to me, "We still have some grieving to do about our past but we sure won't do this with our new superintendent."

It is especially crucial that superintendents establish a working relationship with informal leaders who have a following in the

district, our survey respondents say. This helps establish a shared commitment to a higher educational purpose.

The challenge of molding a staff into an effective leadership team was the secret fear of a prominent Virginia superintendent, Sue Burgess. Unlike other women superintendents we've known, Sue knew from the time she began teaching that she wanted to become a superintendent of schools. When asked where this dream came from, Sue said,

> When I graduated from Roanoke City Schools, we had a woman superintendent, Dorothy Gibboney, the first woman superintendent in Virginia. This was in the '60s. During my 12 years in the Roanoke City Schools we had two superintendents—a woman and a man. If you had asked me at age 18 what percentage of superintendents in our country are women, I would have naively responded, "I guess about 50 percent." I didn't realize that Dorothy Gibboney was an anomaly. (Burgess, 1995)

Sue continues her story:

> The thing that kept my dreams alive is that if I really want to do something, telling me that I can't do it invokes a passionate response. My internal voice says, "I'll show him!" The earliest memory of this was when I was a fourth grader in beginning band. I took my brother's hand-me-down clarinet to school. Toward the end of the year, the band director approached me in private and said, "Sue, did you say you had a coronet or any other instrument at home that you could switch to? I'm sorry to have to tell you this, but you'll never be able to play the clarinet." All summer I kept my secret about his comment and in the fall, a miraculous thing happened! We got a new band director. When I went back to school to start the fifth grade, I walked in with my clarinet and didn't tell the band director I couldn't play. I pretended that I could play and worked even harder that year. By the time that I graduated from high school, I was the only person from Roanoke who had been in the All

> Virginia Band four times. I went on to play in the Roanoke Symphony, the Winston-Salem Symphony and the Greensboro Symphony.

Sue was also discouraged by some educators from becoming an assistant principal, principal, and superintendent:

> During the 23 months that I sought a job as a superintendent, I applied 16 times. Six of those times, I was not selected for an interview. Of the ten times that I interviewed, I was chosen as a finalist six times. On four of those six occasions, I was told informally that I had finished second. I started to get a "bridesmaid complex," but like Avis I decided to try harder! I was especially frustrated over gender-related questions like the following:
>
> How can a woman delegate and follow-up to see that the job is done?
>
> How could a woman check the roads in bad weather to decide whether or not to have school?
>
> If there was a roof problem, how would a woman check it out?
>
> If you get this job, what will your husband do? (Burgess, 1995)

Sue was persistent and kept her dream alive but she was still disturbed by a secret fear that she shared with her husband after receiving her first appointment as a superintendent:

> My fear about becoming a superintendent did not have to do with technical knowledge. I wasn't really intimidated by having to construct a budget or learning about construction, finance, dealing with architects, or any other similar matters. I know that if I am motivated to learn something, that I can! My secret fear centered around the difference between management and leadership. I knew that I was a good manager, but I secretly worried how I would "get things done by others." My music background helped me at this point. The band leader plays not a note himself or herself but is responsible and absolutely accountable for

> the way the band sounds. I knew that I had been a good principal. I knew that I could do the job of director of instruction, but would I be able to get other persons to perform those roles without having to or wanting to do the jobs for them? Could I avoid becoming a micromanager? (Burgess, 1995. Used with permission.)

Sue has answered this question on the firing line. She has learned to give leadership to molding a staff by instruction, delegating, trusting, and teaming. In the process, she has recently received an offer to head a system 10 times larger than the first one she was hired to lead.

Lack of follow-through can be a major cause of derailment. Sixteen percent of Ohio superintendents surveyed believe that they spend too much time on noneducational matters, such as petty problems and complaints. Too much paperwork and time constraints were also cited by this group of superintendents. Ten percent cite unfounded mandates and state mandates as dislikes, and another 10% disliked resolving conflicts and pressures from parents, the community, and special interest groups (O'Callaghan, 1996, p. 55). The point of these data is that there are many real pressures that make it difficult for superintendents to follow through. And, if you add to these woes the response of nearly 50% of Ohio superintendents, the difficulties of funding/finances/passing levies, you grasp the problem of adequate human and nonhuman resources facing these leaders (O'Callaghan, 1996, p. 119).

The secret to having good follow-through is to put together teams of people who get the job done. Once again, the superintendent who has the slightest inclination to be a micromanager is in trouble, because a lack of trust in the abilities of others teaches them to be hesitant. Followers always have to check with the superintendent, thus further eroding the superintendent's time as a resource.

Overdependence, particularly on the board of education as a whole or with a few board members, was cited as another major cause of superintendent derailment. A former superintendent, who has moved into university administration, shares the frustration she felt on the firing line:

> Due to the intensity of the job, you always know that burnout can be just around the corner. Until our governance system is restructured, I would deal with the loneliness and frustration of the superintendency, much of which is caused by how school boards function in this way: I would cry a lot with those whom I really trust; I would try not to make any decisions; I would kiss up to the board and let board members make any hiring decisions they wanted to; and I would define my role as a maintenance person. As a result, I might get two contracts of four years each. (Brubaker & Shelton, 1995, p. 18)

The former superintendent might well have added that the price you pay for such a strategy is emptiness and cynicism—the death of hope.

Conclusion

We want to end our present discussion of the major causes of derailment on a hopeful note. Certainly, there are important challenges facing today's assistant principals, principals, and superintendents—probably greater than at any time in our nation's history. The extreme optimism following World War II has been replaced by realistic hope. This is to say that things will not naturally get better but will depend on hard work by leaders who are competent and care. Our survey and the survey of Ohio superintendents (O'Callaghan, 1996) indicate that educational leaders like best being in a position to implement both vision and good educational programs. They also like working with staff and community. Success experienced by teachers and students is important to superintendents and principals. Most educational leaders like the challenge of the job and being in a position to make a difference (p. 51).

In the following chapter, we will identify and discuss antiderailment strategies—those concrete next steps that we can take to avoid wasting personal and organizational resources.

3

Antiderailment Strategies

As an educator, you are concerned about derailment from two perspectives: your personal derailment and the cost of derailment of others to the educational setting where you give leadership. It is simply common sense, therefore, that you can identify and implement antiderailment strategies that will enhance personal and organizational effectiveness.

Our research uncovered a number of insights that you might find useful as you ponder the matter of derailment. These insights are general in nature and are not listed in any particular order. We have framed our understandings about preventing derailment in the form of recommendations.

This chapter's introduction to antiderailment strategies will be followed by two chapters that spell out in specific terms how staff development can help administrators and teacher leaders both avoid and deal effectively with derailment. Staff development in this case recognizes the role that organizations have played in causing derailment (the organizational face of derailment) as well as the role that persons have played in causing their own derailment (the personal face of derailment). To locate blame is less important than taking steps to help persons and organiza-

tions, schools and school systems, both avoid and deal productively with derailment.

Recommendation 1: *Ask yourself what you are currently doing to avoid derailment.* Listen also to others' assessments of their own effectiveness. Current research on leadership effectiveness suggests that seeking and responding to feedback is crucial to the leader's success (Lombardo & Eichinger, 1995). The feedback won't always be good news. A trusted associate, for example, once advised a superintendent, "You are so data-driven that you fail to realize that real change depends on persons rather than numbers." But that superintendent needed that feedback.

Given the technical responsibilities of your job as an educational leader, it is challenging to take time to reflect. And yet, it is precisely your ability to reflect that can help you avoid derailment. A reflective exercise we have found instructive is to ask educational leaders to focus on a person they know whose halted progression became a derailment. We then ask each educator to describe in detail a success story about this person, followed by the story of his or her derailment (McCall & Lombardo, 1983). The following four questions emerge from this exercise:

1. Why was this leader who derailed successful in the first place?
2. What events caused their weaknesses to surface?
3. What caused this person to derail?
4. How did this person differ from others who continued to be successful? (McCall & Lombardo, 1983)

This reflective exercise makes a number of things clear to participants. First, a person's success and derailment can't be separate from the life of the organization and vice versa. Second, a person's success at one point in an organization's history may be a cause of derailment at a later time in that organization's history. Third, a person's strength can also be viewed as a weakness. Fourth, events that cause derailment are seldom dramatic but instead are usually small and cumulative. Fifth, all leaders leave tracks from which we can learn.

Recommendation 2: Take care to create a culture in which staff members feel comfortable entertaining conflicting ideas. Teaching-team leaders, assistant principals, principals, central office coordinators, and superintendents are especially challenged to listen to the dissident voice. It is often from this voice that the educator learns the most. The key is to prize what can be learned as much as what can be managed.

It is our enthusiasm for our work that keeps us from becoming cynical—the deadliest of leadership qualities. It is helpful to remember that one of the greatest gifts we can give not only those we lead but also ourselves is to build on the memory of what it was like to be a child. Curiosity and a sense of exploration drove us as children to learn everything we could about the world around us.

Recommendation 3: It can be useful to think about which steps you took as you ascended the career ladder, so that you can capitalize on your ability to make good choices—A process that will tell you what you need to do in the present. Reflect also on the transitional periods in your career, those defining moments and critical incidents that led you to new understandings and new challenges. Positive images from your past can be inspiring in the present. It is easy to focus on what has gone wrong and what is missing, to the detriment of what has gone right and what is there to capitalize on in the present and the future. It is a mistake to get stuck in a deficit model, where we pay interest on a debt we don't owe.

Recommendation 4: Build a strong support base with principals. Principals are among the most autonomous middle managers in our society, and alumni, especially at the high school level, have strong feelings of loyalty toward their school. The fact of the matter is that high-quality principals make everyone's job easier.

Recommendation 5: Build trust throughout the organization. Trust depends on creating an affinity connection. Staff members will perceive you as authentic when you listen and follow through with concrete steps that assure others they have been heard.

Educational leaders are in many ways what they talk about. If you have a passion for curriculum, instruction, and learning, and talk frequently about these matters with others, your enthusiasm can be contagious. If you engage only in small talk, you might be well liked, but you won't be respected by teachers and others who are serious about education.

You will also erode your credibility if you always insist on being right. M. Scott Peck (1993) speaks to the matter of pretension and rigidity: "Most of the evil in the world—the incivility—is committed by people who are absolutely certain that they know what they're doing" (p. 91). It's fine to be wrong sometimes, as long as you are a learner and willing to change. The high visibility of your position makes an apology a sign of strength rather than weakness. It demonstrates that you have compassion and understanding.

Recommendation 6: As a superintendent, meet and plan with the school board in a way that is consistent with your common expectations. As an assistant principal or principal, meet and plan with advisory boards in a way that is consistent with your common expectations. Our research indicates that there is frequent misunderstanding and lack of comprehension between such bodies when they have substantially less information about strategic issues than you do.

Recommendation 7: Brainstorm with trusted colleagues to find solutions to hypothetical situations that call for difficult decisions. This exercise can not only help you identify opportunities and avoid pitfalls but also help you recognize that each situation has its own set of factors that must be considered. This exercise will also demonstrate that there is no one generalization that holds for all people in all situations. Educators must have contingency plans and use their artistry in implementing them.

Recommendation 8: If you are a superintendent, create and manage a "supercommittee" consisting of high-level leaders, including corporate giants, in the community. This will give you an opportunity to discuss important issues with others who understand high-level decision making. Your community of support will

be noticed, increasing your credibility in the district. If you are a subordinate to the superintendent, observe carefully what the superintendent does or does not do with regard to this recommendation, and make plans for how you will treat this matter if and when you are in a position to do so.

Recommendation 9: Rely on your common sense. The use of a car and driver by a superintendent of schools might make a lot of sense, because you could get considerable work done on your way to and from appointments. But some people in the district might well view you as arrogant and insensitive to funding shortages. Common sense also tells you that it's wise to use existing administrative mechanisms—such as standing committees and forums as well as teacher and student advisory councils—when you have a need to address a specific issue.

Recommendation 10: It is important to recognize that both you and your organization can make mistakes that can lead to derailment. We refer to the former as the personal face of derailment and the latter as the organizational face of derailment (Lombardo & Eichinger, 1995). We have mentioned this several times, but the following list of formal or de facto "developmental" processes and beliefs of organizations will make clear how cognitive fallacies held by such organizations can lead to derailment (Lombardo & Eichinger, 1995):

1. Giving more attention to educational experience and job rotations than to aspiring subordinates.
2. Moving people so quickly that they simply don't have time to successfully complete a job. (For many leaders, this means that their mistakes don't catch up with them.)
3. Moving people vertically from one low-challenging job to another so that they don't learn from new experiences.
4. Knocking an educational leader off track for one mistake, whereas successful leaders openly admit that their risk taking has naturally led to mistakes from which they have learned.

5. Appointing too many so-called sharks to the fast track, where their aggressiveness, arrogance, and autonomous styles begin as strengths but end as liabilities.
6. Giving too much attention during feedback sessions to *what you did*, with little attention given to *how you did it*.
7. Defining challenges as moving up the ladder when, in fact, one can often find greater challenges in moving toward learning situations wherever they may occur.
8. Confusing traditional signs of intelligence with common-sense learning acquired through a variety of experiences.

Awareness of the cognitive fallacies listed above can help you realize that derailment, in the event that it becomes a part of your career path, isn't necessarily your fault. Once again, you don't have to pay interest on a debt you don't owe.

Recommendation 11: Don't forget to be true to yourself. This is ultimately the only benchmark of any significance. We live in an outcome-based society whose standards of success for educators, particularly superintendents, are higher test scores, more high school graduates attending prestigious universities, and so on. But those measures are secondary to your internal compass of success.

Try analyzing your basic assumptions about what really matters and then honing those premises into educational purpose. Ask yourself, "How has my leadership contributed to this purpose?"

The main thing: Your intentionality or desire to avoid derailment is an important first step and, when grafted to useful knowledge, can be most effective in both avoiding and dealing with derailment.

We now turn to the important role staff development can play in helping educational leaders both avoid and deal productively with derailment.

4

A Personal and Organizational Plan for Improvement

We are convinced that staff development for school and school system administrators is the key in preventing and dealing with derailment. Derailment leads to an incredible amount of waste in human resources, which causes a heavy personal and organizational toll.

If you pick up almost any article or book on curriculum or instructional leadership, you will discover the following two common findings: (a) the formally appointed leader of the organization, such as the principal or superintendent, sets the tone for all within the organization; and (b) staff development or inservice education is a major vehicle the formally appointed leader can and should use as a teacher educator, administrator educator, or both.

Therefore, the first step in giving leadership to staff development for prospective and current educational administrators is to recognize the primary role that school and school system administrators play in the staff development process. Most educators we talk to tend to locate staff development leadership in schools of education at universities. This is probably in large measure due to the fact that, in most parts of the United States, universities control administrator credentialing by teaching courses that lead

to State Department of Education assignment of credentials. Because of this, professors of education consider themselves, and are considered by school leaders, as teacher and administrator educators. But in fact, much if not most of this responsibility is in the hands of school and school system leaders. For example, the day-to-day supervision of master's, sixth-year, and doctoral interns in administration is done by assistant principals, principals, and central office leaders. School and school system administrators serve as models for interns. Interns want to be assistant principals, not professors of education, and they know that their employment opportunities depend primarily on finding advocates in schools and school systems rather than at the university. In short, we strongly believe that school and school system leaders will be the main players in giving leadership to administrator education programs centering on the derailment problem. This is not to minimize the supportive role that professors of educational leadership can play in working with schools and school systems; but it is to say that it is essential we be head-on honest about who will be in the drivers' seat on the matter of primary responsibility for helping educational leaders avoid and deal with derailment issues. We therefore begin this chapter with a discussion of what we feel works and doesn't work as educational leaders are participants in staff development. This discussion will set the stage for the remainder of the chapter, which is devoted to helping you, the reader, create a personal development plan for improvement. In using the ideas in this chapter, we have discovered that they are especially helpful to two groups of educators: those of you who are heading for an assistant principalship, for whom the whole universe of derailment possibilities is relatively new, and those of you already in assistant principalships, principalships, and central office leadership positions, for whom the more subtle causes of derailment are of special significance.

The second step in giving leadership to staff development for administrators aimed at preventing derailment is to *identify the one overarching characteristic you want a child you love to have when he or she is graduated from high school.* Once you have engaged yourself in this exercise, you can involve colleagues in staff development activities to also participate in what we have

found to be the most absorbing of inservice challenges. (The careful wording of this second step is the key to provoking discussion. The phrase *one overarching characteristic* forces participants to make a forced-choice decision.)

Seymour Sarason (1995), Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Yale University, has both framed and answered this question in his seminal work, *Parental Involvement and the Political Principle:* "If when a child is graduated from high school that child is motivated to learn more about self and the world, then I would say that schooling has achieved its overarching purpose" (p. 135). The awe, wonder, and amazement that a child has as a beginning student should be nurtured by the schooling process (Brubaker, 1994). Sarason (1995) adds, "To want to continue to explore, to find answers to personally meaningful questions, issues, and possibilities is the most important purpose of schooling" (p. 136).

How is this overarching purpose-of-schooling statement helpful to staff development leaders involved in preventing and dealing with derailment? Overarching purpose can serve as a beacon much like that from a lighthouse. It can give us a sense of direction. It can also help us assess present practices to see if they are consistent with our rhetoric about overarching purpose. If such consistency exists, chances of derailment are minimized and the educational leader has the self-assured sense of authenticity from "walking the talk" and being centered.

Sarason's comments point us to the third step in providing staff development opportunities for administrators interested in preventing and dealing with derailment: These opportunities must help administrators associate personal meaning with them. School and school system administrators tell us that many of their staff development programs are designed to introduce them to recent fads that they are expected to implement in much the same way that a technician installs new hardware. A principal expressed this best: "It's like being ordered to move sandbags from point A to point B and then back again. It is little more than meaningless activity." (It is interesting to note how Sarason's question about overarching purpose acquired personal meaning when framed in terms like *a child I love.*) Real change is "the opposite of a fad or fashion" (Sarason, 1996, p. 91). A convergence of forces produces

something new and personally meaningful to participants. We may say when this happens that those involved in real change achieve a new understanding of self and act in a way that is consistent with this knowledge (Sarason, 1996).

This understanding of self is sometimes found in places you wouldn't expect it to be found. A relatively new high school principal describes the joy of this discovery:

> I'm thunderstruck at the job that faces me as a high school principal on those rare occasions when I have time to think. I plunged into this job 2 years ago and am just coming up for air. Regional conferences are the only chance for reflection. Now my doctoral program gives me a chance to plan to think again.

A fourth step is that educational administrators interested in derailment must involve those they expect to influence in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of staff development activities so that ownership for such activities is assured. If a representative going from the larger group of participants is involved in planning, they will become a core group that shares their enthusiasm for staff development activities to follow. In the process, they will help staff development leaders sharpen their efforts.

A fifth step is recognizing that much, perhaps most, of the learning from staff development efforts on derailment will occur in informal rather than formal settings. When participants are truly motivated by inservice activities, they share their new knowledge with each other during breaks, after sessions, and before the next day's activities. It is sometimes said that we are what we eat but it is also true that we are what we talk about.

A sixth and final step is leader recognition that the more I am involved in learning or the more curious I am, the more likely it is that others will be involved in learning. A staff development leader said it this way, with a twinkle in his eye:

> I think that at least one person here today should have a really good time and learn a lot and I would like to nominate

myself. If I am really turned on to learning, it is more likely that you will also be turned on to learning.

To have this spirit is to have all of the feelings associated with risk taking, for you will no longer be the so-called answer man or answer woman—the kind of leader who views participants as empty vessels to be filled. Patrick Welsh (1987), author of *Tales Out of School,* describes this risk-taking feeling: "The books on pedagogy stress the importance of control in the classroom. But it's when things get a little out of control—that real learning takes place" (p. 16).

Now that we have identified steps involved in implementing staff development activities aimed at preventing and dealing with derailment, we must address another important question: *What vehicles can I use to implement my basic assumptions about staff development for school and school system administrators?* The following outline may be useful in answering this question:

1. *Cases* demonstrating how school and school system administrators have avoided and dealt with derailment can be useful. Simply stated, the case approach is the next best thing to being there (Stake, 1995). Lee Shulman (1995) argues that "cases serve as a bridge between theory and practice." Dan Lortie (1995) adds, "Uncertainty is a built-in feature of good cases and perfect solutions do not often arise in their analysis. We acknowledge rather than deny the 'messy' nature of administrative work" (p. 6). (See Resource H at the end of this book for cases dealing with derailment of educational leaders.)

2. *Seminars and workshops* can be effective vehicles for presenting and discussing ideas on derailment. The key is to have activities that actively involve participants.

3. *Regularly scheduled meetings of administrators* can involve more than the sharing of technical information. Cases can be used to quickly introduce examples of derailment, after which discussion can be invited.

4. *Formative and summative evaluation of school and school system leaders* can be an excellent opportunity to share ideas

related to derailment. The main advantage of this vehicle is that it is often a one-on-one situation, during which an honest sharing of ideas may occur. The degree of stress experienced by not only the person being evaluated but also the evaluator will depend on the history of their relationship and their track records. Summative evaluations are usually more stressful than formative ones.

5. *Mentoring* can be a nurturing vehicle that also provides the power of example for the relatively new member of the school system. The effective mentor conveys the feeling that "I care about you and your professional and personal growth." The key, rather obviously, is who is paired with whom. When the mentoring relationship is right, ideas about derailment can be shared in a honest and forthright way.

6. *Providing opportunities for others to lead* can be a rewarding activity that give potential leaders an opportunity to try out their wings. The confidence and learning gained from such experience can be instrumental in helping new educational leaders avoid derailment.

7. *Commitment to action programs and taking potential as well as present leaders backstage in the process* can provide them with knowledge not found in textbooks. Those taken backstage will also feel trusted with important information as to how to avoid derailment.

8. *Stories and narratives about successful leadership* are ways to communicate what should and can be done to avoid and deal with derailment. The choice of stories is less significant than what they symbolize to the teller and the listener.

9. *Study groups* can be used to study and discuss derailment. A small group of elementary school principals met in early-morning monthly sessions at different schools to discuss matters related to derailment.

10. *Retreats* can involve administrators in get-togethers away from school sites where they won't be constantly interrupted by the everyday demands of their jobs. We sometimes call these *advances*, which adds an interesting and humorous twist to planning for such events.

Thus far in this chapter, we have discussed the role that staff development can play with regard to the derailment issue. We will conclude this section of the chapter with a list of recommendations that your school system may well find useful in helping leaders both avoid and deal effectively with derailment.

Recommendation 1: Recognize that your challenge is to help leaders identify, use, and refine talents that they may or may not recognize in themselves. We have found the talent inventory shown in Table 4.1 helpful in meeting this challenge. The participant who completes this inventory will be fleshing out a portrait of his or her calling or vocation. During a typical day at work, you will use more talents than you probably realize you have. Your first task is to write, in the first (left) column, a chronology of an ideal (best) day in the school year. Please do this from the time you get up in the morning until the time you go to sleep at night. The first item or two may read something like this: 6 a.m. got up; 6:15 a.m. showered and put on favorite clothes; 6:30 ate a good breakfast, and so on. Your second task is to list, in the second column, the unique qualities (talents) you used in correspondence with the times you listed in the first column. Each of these qualities is a "tape" that goes off in your head when you encounter a particular situation. For example, 8:15 a.m. "I used my organizational and communication skills to answer students' questions in the office." Your third task is to name, in the third column, the sources of the tape you listed in the second column. These sources may include a parent or parents, a teacher, a religious figure, an aunt, an uncle, a grandparent, a friend, or others. For example, 9 a.m. "I took the students to the media center and introduced them to basic computer skills for finding materials. My aunt, an alumnus of the college I attended, introduced me to the college by taking me to its library. I've loved libraries and media centers ever since."

Your final task is to write, in the fourth column, your decision to either keep and act out the tape from childhood, or reverse the tape and not act it out as you were instructed to as a child. For example, 2 p.m. "I used my intelligence and physical bearing to break up a fight at school. The tape that went off in my head was to get away from the fight. That's what my parents, teachers, and

TABLE 4.1 A Talent Inventory

Chronology of an Ideal (Best) School-Year Day	*My Unique Qualities in This Day (Tapes)*	*Sources of These Tapes*	*Personal Decisions to Keep These Tapes (Act on Them)*

Purpose Statement: My purpose is to use my talents of _____, _____, and _____ to support and inspire others to identify and use their talents.

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other adults taught me. But then I reversed the tape, because I knew that in my role as assistant principal, I had to address the matter rather than walk away from it."

Hundreds of educators have responded to this talent inventory. Some of the talents they have listed are preparation skills; proactivity; follow-through; the ability to articulate, verbally and in writing; a sense of humor; the ability to motivate others to work together on committees; being a good team member; and being firm but fair with students (Brubaker, 1994). In reading this list of talents, it is interesting to note that they are precisely the qualities missing in administrators who derailed. (See Chapter 2, "What Causes Educational Leaders to Derail?")

Recommendation 2: Talents are discovered and self-esteem is gained when educational leaders are placed in challenging situations from which they can learn. Educational leaders we have surveyed and interviewed tell us that at the beginning of their careers, they felt a tug-of-war take place within them between two forces: "get involved" versus "stay back." And yet, they agree to a person that they learned only from being involved.

One of the most interesting and satisfying experiences a staff development leader can have is to watch a neophyte leader become a seasoned leader who learns to deal with uncertainty in a self-assured way. The leader who learns from experience has enough of an edge to be involved but not so much that others lose confidence in him or her.

Experience also teaches the educational leader the importance of knowing what he or she doesn't know and then deciding what to do about this void. It is the challenge of learning new and useful things that motivates the unfinished leader.

A school system or school's seasoned leaders are in a unique position to find challenging situations, where teacher leaders and beginning administrators can try out their wings while still having a safety net of support from those who care about hem.

Recommendation 3: Educational leaders need honest and helpful feedback on their progress. The major complaint we have heard about evaluation and feedback is that participants largely

get either negative or positive feedback. That is, there is a lack of balance in the assessment process. We can't always expect positive feedback, but when we are criticized, it can be done in such a way that the evaluator is confident that we can improve and feel better for having done so. The person who gives us only praise probably wants our approval at all costs. The person who gives us only criticism is usually projecting his or her own insecurities on us. Neither extreme is helpful to our growth and development.

The artistry of the person giving feedback is evident when the person being assessed asks for advice on how to improve one area or another. This is a sure indication that both assessor and subject have bought into the development process for the good of the organization and the person.

This artistry was brought home to us by a doctoral student and principal, who said this:

> I just finished an evaluation of a difficult teacher. I was originally going to categorize her—give her a number (1, 2, or 3) and move on. Instead, I decided to ask her a question (reframe the evaluation format). "I hear what you're saying (your stated theory) about the music program. How does that match up with what you're doing in class?" We had good dialogue. I, the principal, learned a lot and her comments suggested that she did, too.

Recommendation 4: All educational leaders should participate in the organizational development system. A main advantage of this is that a group of educational leaders, usually at the beginning stage of their career, don't feel that they are pawns being *done unto* but instead sense that they are included or being *done with*. Experienced leaders who demonstrate that they can take criticism and change set a powerful example for others.

Any organization has contradictions that demand hard work to be reconciled. When there is too great a distance between what the organization says it values and what it really values in its actions, there is bound to be a morale problem. For example, the superintendent who accepts a large raise when teachers and others receive no raise or a minimal one will have his or her

credibility eroded. Or, the principal who talks about shared decision making but then dumps responsibilities on assistant principals and teacher leaders also becomes a walking contradiction. (See Resource F for exercises on contradictions.)

Recommendation 5: No organizational development system is perfect. Make it clear to all concerned that your system is open to suggestions for improvement. Too often, we introduce a new system as a carefully wrapped package, a perfect product that must not be tampered with in any way. This is an easy trap to fall into, because those who create the system have invested a good deal of time and effort. Those who construct the system must have their egos in check by valuing what can be accomplished more than being personally rewarded for their input. The effectiveness of a system, something that invites alteration and error, must be more important than the efficiency of the system.

A Personal Development Plan for Improvement

Effective leaders have a sense of destiny and see their legacy in those they lead (Peck, 1993). A personal development plan must, therefore, begin with the question, "What is my sense of calling?" We commonly think of one's vocation as his or her job or career, but the Latin verb *vocare*, "to call," has a much deeper and more comprehensive meaning.

An educator in the Midwest talks about her sense of destiny:

> My kindergarten teacher and I had the same last name, and so when I played school in the neighborhood, I was usually chosen to be the teacher. After school and during the summertime, my friends and I went to the playground and I was usually "the teacher" during recess time. I knew that I wanted to be a teacher from the time I was 5. In fact, I wanted to be one of the best, just like my best teachers.

An interesting thing about the feeling that you are called to do great things is that your "calling will likely be worked out in ways that you currently can't even begin to imagine" (Peck, 1993, p. 70). The midwestern educator continues her story:

> My career path is a real mystery to me. After teaching for 10 years, I became interested in special education because of a special child in my classroom whom I didn't think I was reaching. I returned to school, got my master's degree in special education, and became a special education teacher. Then I was asked to become director of special education in the school system. This led me to a doctoral program with a major in special education. A year ago, a friend at the university started a special education program for pre-school children and asked me to follow her as the director of the program. I had no idea at age 5 that I would be involved in so many different things, but I still have the same love for children that I had when I was a child. (Brubaker, 1994, pp. 29-30)

This teacher's sense of destiny and calling were inspired by her love for children and her desire to find ways to meet their needs. In the process, she also met her own needs. The particular position that she had at any given time was less important than her sense of calling.

You may wish to return to the Talent Inventory (Table 4.1) in the previous section of this chapter to get in touch with your sense of calling and the persons who fueled it. Most persons who have completed the Talent Inventory identify important people in their lives who saw talents they often didn't recognize in themselves.

You are now faced with the question, "How does my present position fit with my sense of calling?" If there is a fit, you are on course with your self-development plan. If not, what options are open to you to follow? For example, one assistant high school principal discovered that her definition of her role was the key to being aligned with her sense of calling: "When I became an assistant high school principal, I didn't know what I was doing. I thought I was the instrument of punishment. I've learned to be

the instrument of positive behavioral change." Another high school assistant principal found that he had to move into the role of principal to get on track with his sense of calling, due to the way his former principal had defined his role as assistant principal:

> When I was an assistant high school principal, the principal measured my success by the number of kids I disciplined. The tone for the school was set by the principal, who seemed to always be looking for students to do something wrong. The school appeared to be run for the convenience of the staff rather than what was good for the students. When I got my own school, I could set the tone in a more positive way.

Now that you have given attention to your sense of calling and your talents, those gifts you have given to others and yourself, we ask you to revisit Chapter 1, "Self-Assessment Checklists," and Chapter 2, "What Causes Educational Leaders to Derail?" Please briefly list the strengths and weaknesses (challenges) of your present leadership style:

Strengths	**Weaknesses (Challenges)**

A sample list of an educational leader's strengths and weaknesses follows:

Strengths	**Weaknesses (Challenges)**
proactive, energetic, bright	impatient/sometimes take on too much
compassionate/warm/ personable	need to listen better
excellent problem solver	inclined to micromanage

excellent follow-through	need to delegate and trust team members more
curious/love learning and improving	sometimes tell people more than they want to hear—come across as expert on everything
can make tough decisions	sometimes make snap judgments

Next, we invite you to assess the degree of satisfaction you have in your present position in light of the strengths and weaknesses (challenges) you have identified:

_____

_____

_____

_____

We would now like to have you identify one or more of your weaknesses (challenges) that you can work on to improve your job performance and probably experience more satisfaction in your present position:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Your challenge at this point is to find ways to move from where you are in your present position to where you want to be in this position. Please reread the previous section of this chapter with an eye on activities and advice that can help you lead better and achieve more satisfaction in your present position. List those activities and words of advice that may be helpful in your action plan:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

It is often helpful to have a colleague or trusted friend play the role of adviser or mentor. Ask this person to add to your list of activities and advice and discuss ways in which your involvement in such activities will help you reach your goal of improved job performance and satisfaction:

	Activities	**Ways in Which Activities Can Help Me Reach Goals**
6.	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____

It is clear up to this point that *you,* along with the help of your mentor, have decided what changes should be made, how they should be made, and at what time they should be made. In short, this is *your* development plan for improving your leadership in your present position.

Although it is not pleasant to anticipate difficulties during a honeymoon, the time when you are constructing plans for a better future, it can be useful to identify possible barriers or pitfalls that may face you when you begin to implement your self-development plan. We ask you to list these now:

Possible Barriers

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

It can be helpful to discuss these with your mentor, who may anticipate barriers you have overlooked. Your mentor may also advise you as to how to deal with barriers on your list.

	Barriers	Advice
6.	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____

It now remains for you to do the hard work of implementing your plan of action for making improvements in your leadership in your present position. It is the doing of this work in tough situations that will make you an effective leader. You may return to the preceding lists to check your progress and keep you on course.

Most of you are probably considering other educational positions within or outside of your present school system. The exercises designed to improve your leadership in your present position may be revisited for positions you are considering. You will in the process make an educated guess as to future job satisfaction and fit. It must be added that creative leaders always negotiate the matter of fit.

The Center for Creative Leadership (1995) has identified the following important questions related to the dynamics of development:

> What strengths do I have that may eventually become a weakness (e.g., high decisiveness may lead to arrogance)?
>
> Do I have certain skills that I rely on too much in certain situations? What are those skills? When do I tend to overuse them?
>
> Which of my skills aren't as sophisticated as they need to be in the future (e.g., "all my team-building skills have been developed in stable situations")? Which skills may not matter as much in the future as they do now ("My technical skills won't be as important")?
>
> What new skills might be required of me in the next 12 months (e.g., "I'll have to deal with more conflict and ambiguity as we reorganize our structure")?

> What flaw do I have that hasn't been a problem before, but may suddenly matter (e.g., "I'm creative and lack attention to detail. This now matters because . . .")? (p. 12)

The dynamics of development are so important and interesting that we invite you to both revise and add to the list of questions just cited. Your answers to these questions will be guiding principles for your leadership efforts.

Personal and Organizational Learning

Staff development, the development of persons and organizations, is really all about learning—the learning of persons and organizations. Nancy Dixon (1995) speaks eloquently about this relationship. She reminds us that learning is much more than the acquisition of knowledge already known, that learning is a verb connoting action rather than a noun, and part of this action is finding meaning that becomes part of our newly constructed knowledge base. This is certainly a thesis consistent with the philosophical position known as *constructivism*.

Perhaps the most important point made by Dixon is that we must go beyond the simple assumption that organizations should give attention to individual members' learning. She argues that organizations must "establish processes for system-level learning" (Dixon, p. 1). We paraphrase her four-step model as follows: (a) the generation of information as persons act within and outside of the organization, (b) the integration of such information into the organization, (c) the collective interpretation of this information, and (d) action is taken on the basis of the previous three steps. She reminds us that "every step of the cycle must take the collective into account" (Dixon, p. 1).

It is the matter of collective interpretation that is central to personal and organizational learning. According to Dixon, the following four basic assumptions are central to this matter: (a) all persons must be honestly invited to participate in the generation of information; (b) the egalitarian values of speaking openly

without coercion and being respected for this free expression must exist; (c) the size and physical arrangements of the organization must allow for and stimulate interaction between persons and units within the organization; and (d) members of the organization must have and use facilitative processes and skills to participate in discourse.

Dixon's model for organizational learning is powerful, given our society's strong propensity toward seeing change in individualistic terms. Hedrick Smith (1995) describes this propensity best: "The defining core of American capitalism, of course, is individualism. Every man for himself, competing against all comers" (p. 194). Our macho mind-set, a kind of take-no-prisoners view of moving into the open frontier of the West, is graphically illustrated in our view of what matters in baseball. The grand-slam home run, that dramatic crack of the bat that can quickly win the game by emptying the bases, symbolizes our view that the individual pulls himself up by his bootstraps to make all the difference. How different this is from the teamwork heroics of our economic competitors, the Japanese and the Germans (Smith, 1995).

It raises the question facing all educational leaders interested in staff development efforts designed to increase the learning of persons and organizations in the United States of America: How do we build and celebrate community in a society that glorifies the individual? This book has been written to speak to this question. We have chosen the term *person* rather than *individual* to convey our belief that warmth, commonality, and connection must be conveyed in creative and effective leadership. And, we have designed both this chapter and the book to celebrate the personality of the organization as well as the personality of the person. Finally, we must continue to explore ways in which persons can rethink and create effective, not simply efficient, organizations, which in turn respect the creative talents of persons. Much of this challenge will be worked out with the talent pool of future school and school system leaders. It is this challenge that is the subject of the next chapter, "Preparing Teacher Leaders for Tomorrow's Leadership Positions."

5

Preparing Teacher Leaders for Tomorrow's Leadership Positions

This chapter is written for teacher leaders and those who give leadership to teacher leaders: assistant principals, principals, and central office leaders—including superintendents. Much of the information will be new to teacher leaders. Others can use the chapter as a kind of checklist to see how they are doing in their present positions. The connection between this chapter and derailment will be obvious: Information learned and applied can prevent derailment and help you, the reader, deal with derailment and stay on track.

Tomorrow's educational leaders have an important advantage that most of today's educational leaders didn't have: They are teachers in schools and school systems that have afforded them opportunities to practice leading before assuming assistant principalships, principalships, and central office positions. Recent efforts to flatten organizations and involve teachers in shared decision making, often in the name of Site-Based Management (SBM), have given teacher leaders the chance to see if they want to be school administrators and if so, the kind of school leaders they wish to be as they try to make a difference in the lives of children and adults. In short, we have created *within* school

systems and schools an administrator preparation system potentially much more powerful than similar efforts at colleges and universities. Many teachers have experienced leadership over a sustained period of time rather than simply reading about it in textbooks, followed by a brief internship.

This relatively recent phenomenon has its roots in educational reform legislation and implementation that demand that teachers assume leadership roles. Teachers need leadership skills to motivate students and colleagues, communicate with and influence parents, identify and use human and nonhuman resources, and deal effectively with education issues and challenges. We are moving toward a level of decentralization in many school systems, whereby schools take on responsibilities formerly residing in central offices: staff development, textbook selection, use of the school day, decisions regarding innovative instructional programs, and a whole range of administrative decisions, such as the scheduling of students and teachers and budgets.

Derailment is an organizing theme that can be of real value to university and school system leaders as they provide staff development opportunities for teacher leaders who will be tomorrow's assistant principals, principals, and central office leaders. Subthemes are (a) how to prevent derailment and (b) how to deal with it effectively when it occurs.

A Grounding for Teacher Leader Development

Initially, we must recognize that those who are interested in teacher leader development have a set of beliefs or commitments that serve as a foundation or grounding for more technical strategies and tactics. Therefore, we wish to identify and discuss the basic beliefs that we hold with regard to teacher leader development. These basic beliefs or groundings are often silent assumptions that contribute to our success or lack thereof in solving problems and reconciling dilemmas. Our challenge is to identify and give voice to these silent assumptions.

First, schools and schooling must be grounded in democratic principles. It is both desirable and possible to realize this commitment. Engle and Ochoa (1988) spell out some of these principles:

> The most basic value of democracy is respect for the dignity of the individual.
>
> A second tenet is the right of individuals and groups to participate in decisions within the society as a whole.
>
> A third tenet is the right of all citizens to be informed.
>
> Fourth, democracy assumes an open society in the sense that . . . it is never completed. There are no final solutions, no unquestioned answers.
>
> Lastly, democracy assumes some independence of the individual from the group. An open society requires that individuals achieve some autonomy from their own group. (pp. 9-10. Used with permission.)

The following commitments build on our first and central belief in democratic principles in schools and school systems.

A second commitment we strongly support is that a teacher leader development program must give attention to both political power and spiritual power. As M. Scott Peck has stated so eloquently, "political power is a matter of externals and spiritual power a matter of what is within" (1993, p. 128). If our teacher leaders focus only on the political, they will pay a high price when they become principals and central office leaders. Hedrick Smith (1988) describes this price: "Politicians strike me as a lonely crowd, making few deep friendships because almost every relationship is tainted by the calculus of power: How will this help me?" (p. 92). (The reader will recall that one of the major causes of leader derailment is the self-serving school or school system administrator who leaves others with the impression that his or her personal advancement is the only thing that matters.) The teacher leader or school administrator who is strictly political locates power outside of self. Gloria Steinem (1992) describes this matter: "Hierarchies try to convince us that all power and well-being come from the outside, that our self esteem depends on obedience and measuring up to their requirements" (pp. 33-34).

The political orientation described above is realized in a top-down governance style, a bureaucratic model for governance: (a) anticipate public reaction, (b) make the decision, and (c) implement the decision (Brubaker, 1982). Once again, this leadership style is reactive and locates power in public reaction to the exclusion of what the leader's internal moral compass has to say. Sociologist Max Weber described this best:

> [Bureaucracy by] its special nature develops the more perfectly the more bureaucracy is "dehumanized," the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation. This is the specific nature of bureaucracy. (quoted in Gerth & Mills, 1946, pp. 215-216)

What price do we pay for this dehumanization? We deny ourselves the opportunity to directly encounter other persons. Instead of participating in the creative process, "we worship technique . . . as a way of evading the anxiety of the direct encounter" (May, 1975, p. 101).

If we entertain the creativity within us, we risk the anxiety of the direct encounter. We are not afraid to be proactive. "There is a constant battle in each of us," according to psychiatrist Arnold A. Hutschnecker (1974), "between the forces of excitation and inhibition" (p. 8). When we release our spiritual selves, we find the higher ground that helps us reconcile the many contradictions facing us as school and school system leaders. We then ask the following hard questions that make us much more than technicians seeking quick fixes:

1. Our school's children are getting higher test scores, which pleases the parents and the board of education, but are they really learning more or learning what is important to learn?
2. They talk about teamwork in this school and school system, but the most prestigious honor is a solitary one—Teacher of the Year. What can we do to make our actions more consistent with our rhetoric?

3. Board members talk about hiring the best people for jobs but pressure us to nominate their own favorites for positions. What can we do to reconcile this dilemma?

Third, collaborative decisions are not *necessarily* better than noncollaborative ones. Bonnie and Clyde, for example, certainly collaborated but to what end? A friend told us that he was teaching a science lesson in seventh grade and a student brought a muskrat into the classroom. The question was raised, "Is this muskrat male or female?" One student suggested that students vote to decide whether the animal was male or female. Collaboration in this case could simply lead to a sharing of ignorance. Collaboration has many advantages, such as getting persons involved in owning the decision-making process as well as the decisions made, but it does not assure that a particular decision is good or morally sound.

Fourth, those involved in staff development efforts for teacher leaders can invite teachers to lead, but it is a serious mistake to force them to do so. We encountered this matter in a school involved in the shared decision-making process. A new teacher came on board, a teacher who had been actively involved as a team leader in Florida. We were delighted that she had joined our team of teachers in this elementary school. In fact, one of the things that got her the job was her rich experience as a team leader in her previous positions in the Florida school. We simply assumed that she would be one of the six team leaders in our shared decision-making project. We said to her, "Judy, we are so glad you are here. We know you will want to be a team leader representing your grade level." She cringed and said, "I burned out in my last school. I was a member of the leadership team, chair of the hospitality committee, and curriculum representative to central office. I want to take some time off from leadership responsibilities to reflect on my teaching." We were of course disappointed but reminded ourselves that she had every right not to be a member of the leadership team. In fact, if we had tried to coerce her to take the position, we would have had a less than effective leadership team member.

It is also the case that a formally designated committee, such as the SBM leadership team, will sometimes fail to deliver over

the course of a fairly long period of time, after which the principal will turn to another committee to do the job. For example, in one school where we worked, the SBM committee turned into a "gripe group" because half its members refused to think positively. They were experiencing difficult home situations that spilled over into their school lives.

The principal could have micromanaged this advisory group by imposing her will on them. Instead, she turned to the social committee as her governance group, and the school climate improved considerably. Once again, forcing a person or group to do what you want them to do simply doesn't work in the long run.

Fifth, attention must be given to communication. Most communication engaged in by school and school system administrators is verbal rather than written. Listening and speaking are the major vehicles used to communicate. Part of this process is the construction of a common language. Language is power, as evidenced by the superintendent who always used the term *measurement* when referring to evaluation or assessment. Soon, principals and others in the system spoke only about measurement, thus leaving the impression that student and faculty progress had to have numbers attached to it.

In another school system where we worked, a shared decision-making program was introduced. A teacher in the system asked what we were going to call it. We hadn't given any thought to this matter and quickly said, "The Stone Street Project." Simply naming this in this way evoked a number of unexpected responses by the faculty: "Here we go again, a principal needs a dissertation topic." "Does this mean that we are going to be treated like guinea pigs?" What's in a name? A good deal, we discovered.

One of the most difficult things for teacher leaders to learn is the role of "bracketing" in the communication process. Bracketing is "the temporary giving up or setting aside of one's own prejudices, frames of reference and desires" (Peck, 1978, p. 128). The true listener uses bracketing to temporarily communicate total acceptance of the speaker, the result being that the person speaking will feel less threatened and will make himself or herself more vulnerable by telling you more.

Sixth, the learning of all participants in schools and school systems must be at the center of any teacher leader development program. All participants are teachers and learners; they instruct each other in a variety of ways, usually informal, and in turn learn from each other. Unfortunately, this commitment isn't always voiced in school and school system public relations pronouncements: "Schools are for children." "Children's learning first." The truth is that adults are very much a part of the transactional teaching and learning process along with children. In addition, adults have to receive at a high level in order to give at a high level (Sarason, 1972). Show us a school or a classroom where adults are learning rather than treating children as empty vessels waiting to be filled, and we will see a school or classroom where children are learning a great deal and in the process teaching adult educators something.

One of the difficulties in constructing a framework like the one we have constructed is that it doesn't tell you the degree or kind of commitment a leader is willing to give on a specific issue, such as the resegregation of a school system. Roland Nelson, at the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina, has constructed a Commitment Scale/Hierarchy that helps leaders honestly assess what they are willing to do on behalf of a particular commitment to an issue:

1. I will sacrifice my life and/or the lives of my family and/or those I dearly love.
2. I will give up the respect of those whom I love and I'll forego my status and professional achievement.
3. I will forego economic security and my career.
4. I will have serious conflicts between what I think should be done and my reluctance to do it. I may alter my work style and give up those techniques which had previously been successful and beneficial and learn new ones.
5. I will have to alter some habits with which I'm quite comfortable, thus making my job somewhat more difficult. I will feel uncomfortable from time to time as I'll do things

that don't seem to be the best way to do them based on my past experience and present assumptions.

6. It doesn't make any difference as past experience indicates. My choice, therefore, is between Tweedledee and Tweedledum. (Brubaker, 1994, pp. 100-101)

The six commitments we hold with regard to teacher leader development are part of the grounding or foundation for the remainder of this chapter. We believe that they are essential in helping teacher leaders learn about how to both prevent and deal with derailment in their own careers as well as the careers of those they lead. In the next section of this chapter, we give attention to the school context in which teacher leaders develop.

The Realities of the Context in Which Teachers Lead

It is relatively easy to talk about teacher leadership as an ideal construct or abstraction that should be introduced and sustained in schools. It is when teacher leadership is considered *in a particular context* that reality sets in, because the specific variables facing teacher leaders come into play. It is these variables that we will discuss in this section of the chapter. It makes sense that most of these variables deal with the relationship between teacher leaders and their principals.

The principal is officially responsible for what happens in the school. We can talk all we want about flattening the organization, shared decision making, and Site-Based Management as desirable alternatives to top-down traditional management systems and yet we can't eliminate the fact that there is a person officially appointed to accept ultimate responsibility for what goes on in the school as a whole. That person is the principal. The buck stops there. If a school "leaves the track," the principal is blamed by central office leaders, including the superintendent.

The superintendent of schools sets the tone for principals and their schools. If the superintendent not only talks about decen-

tralization and Site-Based Management but also lives this philosophy of education, it is more likely that principals will do likewise for educators in their schools. All will depend on the principal's primary leadership style and his or her willingness to share power. In short, teacher leadership is principal dependent, and the principal leadership is superintendent dependent.

One of the biggest difficulties we have had with Site-Based Management schools occurs when a principal fails to acknowledge that leadership councils are in reality advisory and recommending bodies to the principal. These representative groups may use a variety of sources of power, such as expertise, charisma, and succorance, but they do not have the positional authority delegated to the principal of the school.

If a principal leaves teacher leaders with the impression that they have positional authority assigned to the principal, these teacher leaders feel they have been sold out and the governance system is a sham when they don't get their way on an important issue.

An example of this occurred in December, a month fraught with difficulties due to pressures teachers and administrators have at home in the holiday season. Three issues came to a head. The first, and in many ways the most important, issue concerned the location of the teacher assistants' workroom in an elementary school. At the beginning of this shared decision-making project, the assistants were moved from the stage in the cafeteria to an area in the multipurpose room. This area was partitioned by bulletin boards and wasn't the least bit soundproof. Because the physical education teacher and others used the multipurpose room for their activities, it was difficult for assistants to do work that required concentration, and the noise that assistants made working machines disturbed classes held in the multipurpose room. As the cold weather approached, the problem was accentuated, for more physical education classes had to be held inside the school.

The second issue concerned the supervision of children on the playground during recess time. Some staff members simply weren't supervising students well, with the result being fights and injuries to students. The dilemma may be stated in the form of a question: How can students receive adequate supervision from

some teachers and assistants so that other teachers can have time away from the children during recess time?

The cafeteria was the location of the third issue. Once again, some teachers and assistants didn't provide adequate supervision of students. When a cafeteria gets out of hand, the noise level is intolerable, food and other objects are thrown, and pushing, shoving, and fighting occur. The same question could be raised about the cafeteria as was raised about the playground: How can students receive adequate supervision from some teachers and assistants so that other teachers can have time away from children during lunchtime?

The convergence of these three issues within the same time period—the first few weeks prior to vacation for the holidays—is important to keep in mind in our analysis of what happened.

The leadership team, elected by teachers according to grade levels, spent some time discussing these matters but they were not resolved. One of the team leaders said,

> I knew that things were building up in the principal and something had to be done. I could see the injured children taken into the nurse's room. I also knew that our leadership team was on record as deciding that we didn't have time to discuss the issue until after the holidays.

The result of all of this was a memorandum from the principal that simply stated that (a) teachers would have to accompany their children on the playground during recess time, (b) teachers would have to eat lunch with their children to supervise their behavior, and (c) the assistants would use the teachers' lounge for their workroom, and the teachers' lounge would be relocated in the multipurpose room formerly occupied by assistants. When some teachers asked about the merit of these decisions, the principal assured them that these decisions were clearly within his jurisdiction for he was the officially designated leader of the school.

When teachers returned from the holidays, the principal's preholiday ultimatum was very much on their minds. The leadership team and principal discussed the matter at some length. Both

sides to the controversy apologized for mistakes made. One thing was clear, however: Teachers and their representative bodies are advisory, and the principal has official responsibility for what goes on in the school.

We can see from the previous examples that teacher leaders need to be able to assess their principal's overall leadership style as well as his or her approach in a particular situation. We have found the following Vroom-Yetton (1973) leadership style framework especially helpful in meeting this challenge. (Our modification of this framework is as follows: [a] the term *subordinate* was removed from styles C1, C11, and G11; and [b] G11 was introduced as a leadership style although not used by Vroom and Yetton.[1]

A1	You solve the problem or make the decision yourself, using information available to you at the time.
A11	You obtain the necessary information from your subordinates, then decide the solution to the problem yourself. You may or may not tell your subordinates what the problem is in getting the information from them. The role played by your subordinates in making the decision is clearly providing the necessary information to you, rather than generating or evaluating alternative solutions.
C1	You share the problem with the relevant persons individually, getting their ideas and suggestions without bringing them together as a group. Then you make the decision, which may or may not reflect their influence.
C11	You share the problem with the group, obtaining their collective ideas and suggestions. Then you make the

	decision, which may or may not reflect their influence.
G11	You "suspend" your positional authority in dealing with the issue at hand and adopt a collegial relationship rather than treating other participants as subordinates. You have the right to argue your opinions in the same way that your colleagues have this right. After weighing various alternatives, members of the group try to implement the position that is most highly favored and generally agreed on as the best alternative.
G111	You share the problem with the group. Together you generate and evaluate alternatives and attempt to reach agreement (consensus) on a solution. Your role is much like that of a chairperson. You do not try to influence the group to adopt "your" solution, and you are willing to accept and implement any solution which has the support of the entire group. (p. 12)

Most principals vary their leadership style according to the particular situation in which they find themselves. For example, if a child is hit by a car in the street in front of the school, the principal will probably use an A1 style. If, on the other hand, the principal has little expertise in constructing a class schedule in a high school, he or she may turn this task over to the teachers' advisory council and operate at the G111 level.

The Vroom-Yetton model is a self-assessment tool that can help you, the teacher leader, make sense out of your overall leadership style as well as the particular leadership style you adopt in a specific situation. We have found this framework especially useful when a leadership team and the principal meet at the beginning

of the year. They list examples of the kinds of decisions that fall into various levels of the Vroom-Yetton model. This results in fewer surprises when they face decisions throughout the year. On occasion, a leadership team will invite an outsider into its meetings to identify and discuss leadership styles used during the meeting. This use of an outsider is especially helpful when leaders are so close to an emotional decision that they find it hard to be objective.

On occasion, we meet a principal who uses teacher leader advisory groups as scapegoats for what parents and others consider to be bad decisions made by the principal. This is a misuse of shared decision making, teacher leaders resent it, and the principal's credibility among teachers quickly erodes.

Thus far in this section of the chapter, we have focused on the relationship between teacher leaders and their principal. *Consultants often play a key role in shared decision-making governance systems, thereby creating both opportunities and challenges.* Initially, we must note that there are two kinds of consultants: (a) internal consultants from central office and (b) external consultants from outside of the school system. Perhaps the most important question is, "Did your school initiate contact and ask for the consultant or was the consultant assigned to you?" Ideally, one or more leaders in your school identified a need and asked for help in addressing it. However, it is frequently the case that someone in central office assigns a consultant to your school because of a need they perceive to exist. A director of curriculum and instruction in a fairly large suburban school system takes us backstage on this matter:

> Our superintendent prides himself on his interest in and leadership on behalf of curriculum and instruction. As a result, he and his wife, who works for the State Department of Instruction, make frequent trips to conventions featuring innovative instructional programs and projects. Central office consultants in the various areas of the curriculum, such as math, science, social studies, and language arts, gather the most recent literature on curriculum innova-

> tions and send this along with convention advertisements to the superintendent. Sometimes they deliver it in person to make their sales pitch. And, it works! Our arts program, for example, had tremendous human and nonhuman resources given to it after our superintendent went to a convention and heard a speech on connoisseurship by Elliot Eisner of Stanford University. Eisner was brought in as a consultant and we used many of his materials. The arts are usually the first to be cut in this age of accountability, and our superintendent's interest in Eisner's work made a very positive difference in our school system.

One of the first questions teacher leaders must address is, "What is the relationship between the consultant(s) and the principal?" In the case just described, the principal had no previous knowledge of the consultant, Elliot Eisner, or his work. The superintendent also had no special relationship with the consultant. In a few instances, the principal or a central office leader has a vested interest that complicates matters for teacher leaders. For example, in one system, the superintendent needed a dissertation topic and research project to complete his doctorate at a nearby university. The superintendent used the school and staff of a trusted friend who was a middle school principal to introduce a shared decision-making project. This questionable practice, which usually involves the hiring of the dissertation adviser or a doctoral dissertation committee member as a consultant, has unfortunately been a norm in many departments of educational administration. The pressure is now on you, the teacher leader, to deliver positive results regarding this so-called experimental project so that the superintendent (doctoral student) can complete his degree and declare the project a success, thus building his political capital.

It is helpful to you, a teacher leader, to know what the consultant can and can't deliver. We have encountered the following roles played by consultants with regard to the consultants' expertise:

1. The consultant has the expertise to help the teacher leader in a direct manner. For example, teacher leaders need help in

knowing more about decision-making styles and contingency theory, and the consultant has and shares this knowledge.

2. The consultant, although not an expert in the area of concern, acts as a broker who connects teacher leaders with a source of help. For example, the consultant is an expert on organizational governance but is not an expert on a subject teacher leaders have identified as important: how teachers and staff relate to parents and others in the community. The consultant, therefore, brings in a person who trains airline flight attendants to conduct a staff development program on "presentation of self to the public."

3. The consultant is not an expert in the area of concern, and limited resources keep the consultant from connecting teacher leaders with the expert. For example, the consultant wants to bring in an expert on reaching a special group of at-risk students but the consulting budget is exhausted by early April.

4. The consultant isn't an expert in the area of concern and doesn't know any experts who can deal with the issue. For example, a few children in the school appear to be unreachable and act out their frustration in ways that are detrimental to other high school students in their classes. The consultant and teacher leaders are also frustrated and, despite their efforts, they don't know where to turn next.

It is this fourth situation that is obviously most difficult for teacher leaders to face. They and their consultant don't feel they can fix the problem despite their efforts. They are instead left with the understanding that there is a difference between problems that can be solved and dilemmas that must be reconciled.

The challenge to teacher leaders with regard to consultants is to be as proactive as possible in deciding if you need help from outside the school, and if so, to get the kind of help *you want*. Once you set the stage on this matter, the drama seems to have a life of its own. Once a consultant is on board, teacher leaders, the principal, and the consultant(s) should discuss as honestly as possible what kind of relationship you want to have with each other. Teacher leaders should be conscious of the sources of power

available to them, such as expertise, charisma, and succorance, so that they can influence the direction the leadership team, the principal, and the consultant(s) take in pursuing their goals.

There is an issue of special importance facing teacher leaders with regard to shared decision-making projects: the dissemination of information, particularly the results of their shared decision-making efforts. Progress reports, news releases, television interviews, and other accounts of events at your school are usually in the hands of administrators and consultants. This model for the dissemination of information is consistent with the bureaucratic model, for those higher up decide (a) if the information should be released; (b) the medium of the release, such as a newsletter, newspaper article, radio or television appearance; and (c) the manner or tone in which the information is presented. How ironic it is that those closest to the students often have little say about dissemination of information about those children.

We urge teacher leaders to play an active part in giving leadership to the dissemination process. It will give you invaluable experience that will stand you well in the event that you become administrators and it will be satisfying to tell the story as you feel it should be told. The next section of this chapter will give attention to your presentation of self or, as we call it, the table manners of leadership.

The Table Manners of Leadership

One of the major keys to your success as a teacher leader, the role you presently play, and as an administrator, a role that you may well play in the future, is your presentation of self (Goffman, 1959). An important part of your presentation of self is what Roland Nelson, at the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina, calls the table manners of leadership. By this, he means those small behaviors that facilitate an exchange of information and feelings that leads to learning and better relationships. Stated another way, the table manners of leader-

ship are not simply used to manipulate people as objects within a bureaucratic hierarchy (Peck, 1993). Rather, they are used to create environments where persons can learn from each other. In the remainder of this section of the chapter, we will discuss how teacher leaders can set the stage for a healthy school culture by giving attention to the civilities within such a culture. Before we identify and discuss specific table manners of leadership, we would like to have you complete the following change and conservation inventories:

Inventory 1: A Personal Change and Conservation Inventory

_____ (My Name)

What are the three things about *my leadership* that I highly value and want to conserve?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are the three things about *my leadership* that I want to change—challenges?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Inventory 2: A Reorganizational Change and Conservation Inventory

_____ (Name of Our School)

What are three things about our school that I highly value and want to conserve?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What are three things about our school that I want to change—challenges?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

One of the major values of these inventories is they recognize that some things have to remain the same for other things to change. Some leaders who talk about changes in a school or school system fail to make this point, thereby leaving others with feelings of instability that they don't necessarily need to have.

As you read the remainder of this section of the chapter on the table manners of leadership, please be mindful of the three following questions: (a) Which of your responses to items in the change and conservation inventories, if any, have to do with the table manners of leadership? (b) After reading this section of the chapter, what table manners of leadership in my leadership style do I want to conserve and change? and (c) After reading this section of the chapter, what table manners of leadership in our school do I want to conserve and change? This exercise may also be used with either large or small groups of persons interested in your school—including students. We have found the inventories to be provocative and the source of healthy discussion. In some cases, leadership teams administer the inventories with all participants guaranteed anonymity. (Simply ask participants not to sign their names on the personal change and conservation inventory.) In other situations, leadership team members summarize results from their constituents and share these results at leadership team meetings.

Entrance and exit rituals are important in any setting. For example, one of the adages in the luxury hotel business is that "if you manage the first and last impressions of a guest properly, then you'll have a happy guest" (Kleinfield, 1989, p. 36). One of the first things hotel workers are told is that eye contact is a necessary behavior for greeting guests when they arrive at the hotel (Kleinfield). Such contact communicates your willingness to go out of your way to help the person(s) entering the setting, and it says you are risking a certain kind of vulnerability on their behalf.

It has been useful to us to observe some leaders as they use smiles and other nonverbal behaviors to relax persons entering a setting. They also frequently exhibit the ability to establish an affinity connection with so-called small talk.

Leaders who have given attention to entrance rituals know the importance of the physical setting. For example, one school principal inherited a high counter that served as a barrier between guests and the secretary. The counter was removed to facilitate exchange of ideas and feelings. Another principal instructed the secretary to begin conversations with guests by saying something like "Welcome to *our* school. How may I help you?"

A good energy level on the part of the greeter is important but it is not sufficient in itself. Guests want to know that school leaders have a sense of purpose so that children and adults will be involved in meaningful activity. A clear but concise vision statement communicates this sense of direction: "Everything we do here is aimed at helping children and adults become the best they can be." This general vision statement can be followed by more specific goals for the school.

Principals and teacher leaders can profit from knowing the difference between acceptable onstage and backstage behaviors. For example, the person who is counting lunch money would do well to do so in the principal's office rather than in the secretaries' area. This responsibility requires uninterrupted concentration. If the person in charge of counting money considers guests to be an interruption, they will not feel invited into the school. It is good to remind ourselves that some chaos backstage is necessary for an orderly environment onstage (Kleinfield, 1989).

Many entrance rituals involve answering questions that guests have about what goes on in the educational setting. Most schools have an open house early in the year. In some cases, parents walk an abbreviated schedule of their child's day at school. I (Brubaker) experienced this a few years ago, with the first class being an algebra class. During the brief question and answer period, a mother asked, "Will you tell me if this class will be useful to my son in other math classes and in classes he takes in college?" The teacher responded, "I have no earthly idea." There was a long pause after which the teacher was literally saved by the bell. My

first impulse was to blame the teacher. My second impulse was to blame the principal. My third impulse was to blame teacher educators at universities. I then realized that teachers have probably had no attention given to explaining what they are doing and why to parents in a face-to-face situation during their preservice and inservice education. And yet, the hallmark of a professional is that he or she can explain what he or she is doing and why. We therefore recommend that the table manners of educational leadership in general and entrance and exit rituals in particular be the subject of staff development for teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators.

Exit rituals are also significant. For example, the teacher leader or administrator who walks parents and other guests to the door has the opportunity to prolong their conversation and demonstrate his or her care for the guests. It is an opportunity to summarize what has happened during the visit, thank guests for their interest in the children and the school, and invite them back for another visit.

Exit rituals have demonstrated repeatedly that "there is no more loyal guest than one who has a problem that gets fixed" (Kleinfield, 1989, p. 32). Any parent knows not only the anguish felt when his or her child has a problem but also the joy and relief that comes with the solving of that problem. Luxury hotel surveys have also revealed time and again that "guests very much like being called by name" (Kleinfield, p. 35).

We end our discussion of entrance and exit rituals by describing an out-of-town candidate for a teaching position—a person highly recommended to the principal. The night before the interview, the principal received a call from the candidate, complaining about the hotel room assigned. When the principal arrived at the hotel to try to deal with this matter, the candidate had made such a scene in registering the complaint that the desk clerk simply said to the principal, "Please just get this person out of here." At the end of the day of interviews with the principal, teachers, and central office personnel, the candidate simply left town without saying anything to anyone. The principal and others were shocked at the absence of table manners of the candidate. Needless to say, the candidate didn't get the job.

Listening is probably the most powerful civility available to the teacher leader and school administrator. It is flattering to the speaker and it demonstrates that you aren't self-centered but instead are eager to learn more about the person speaking. By focusing on the speaker, you will also lessen your anxiety (Linver, 1978). By actively listening, you will communicate that you understand where the speaker is coming from and care enough about that person to step into his or her shoes (Linver).

Speaking is another critical communicative skill that may be important in learning more about yourself and others. How significant is this skill in comparison to writing? Sandy Linver (1978), author of *Speakeasy,* answers this question: "The way we interact with other people—both personally and professionally, has little to do with the written word. It is almost totally based on speaking" (p. 18).

There is no one right speaking style. Rather, a speaker's credibility depends on authenticity or genuineness. It therefore makes sense that the starting place for good speaking is to know what kind of person you basically are.

Please take a moment to complete the following self-inventory. It will give you a start in assessing your comfort and proficiency as a speaker.

How Good and Comfortable Are You as a Public Speaker?

Please assess your comfort and proficiency on the following items, from 1 (low) to 5 (high):

	comfort	proficiency
1. Speaking one-on-one.		
2. Listening one-on-one.		
3. Answering questions one-on-one.		
4. Speaking to a small group.		

	comfort	proficiency
5. Listening (as the speaker/ leader) and reading verbal and nonverbal language of the small group.		
6. Answering questions after speaking to a small group.		
7. Speaking to a large group.		
8. Listening (as the speaker/leader) and reading verbal and nonverbal language in a large group.		
9. Answering questions after speaking to a large group.		
10. Telephone interviews.		
11. Television interviews at the television station.		
12. Television interviews on site at your school.		
13. Radio interviews.		
14. Newspaper reporter interviews.		

Are you more comfortable relating to people in formal or informal situations? If your style is more formal, use a podium and stick rather closely to your detailed notes or written speech. If your style is more informal, push the lectern aside and move into the audience as if you were having a conversation. Once again, draw on your "honesty and courage to be authentic with your audience and project to them who you really are" (Linver, p. 59).

Regardless of your style, the secret is to focus on your audience, rather than yourself, and share your warmth with them. One good

way to focus on the audience is to share your sense of humor. This has the effect of relaxing the audience, whether it is 1 person or 100.

My (Brubaker's) father attended a college alumni meeting in Sarasota, Florida, hundreds of miles away from his alma mater, Albion College, in Michigan. The speaker was the president of the college. My father called me after the speech and raved about the president. "Why did you like him so much?" I asked. Dad responded, "He talked to each of us before the speech about our personal interests in the college and he cared about what we had to say." In short, the president set the stage for his own success before he even spoke a word in the more formal setting. In the process, the president relaxed himself before the speech.

The physical setting in which you speak also sets the stage for your speaking. In both formal and informal settings, it can be useful to have a mental checklist. For example, remove distractions, such as a gurgling coffeepot; have chairs, tables, or both arranged the way you want them; assess acoustics and check equipment; and have a resumé for the person who is introducing you. Your preparation for the situation sends the message "I care enough about you, the audience, to have done my homework." And good preparation also gives you, the speaker, a sense of security.

You will naturally be nervous to some extent before speaking in many situations. Treat this nervousness as a good thing, for it means that you care enough about the audience and yourself to get psyched up for the occasion. Self-talk can be helpful as you prepare: "Good going. I have an edge on and I know that this is necessary to do a good job." It is especially helpful to realize that the audience wants you to succeed and is therefore with you from the start.

One of the advantages speaking has over writing is that you get immediate reaction to your ideas. Because 65% of communication is nonverbal body language (Linver, 1978), you will be able to read your audience and know how your ideas are being received. As you share your warmth with them, they will share their warmth with you.

As teacher leaders and possibly educational administrators in the future, you will be expected to go on television. We have prepared a list of guidelines for this challenge:

1. Talk to the reporter, not the camera or microphone. (Look the reporter straight in the eye.)
2. Stand or sit erectly. Don't stoop or bend over.
3. If you say "No comment," add that you will get back to the reporter by such and such a time.
4. Know who you're dealing with and develop rapport with the reporter when possible.
5. Remember that the good photographer (camera person) doesn't always have to have the camera to his or her eye. The camera can be rolling from any position, even if it is under his or her arm.
6. Be politely on your guard all the time.
7. Take advantage of nonconfrontational "good news" programs.
8. The bottom line is to meet reporters head-on and be honest. The camera doesn't lie. It will see the eyes.
9. Be cool and confident. It disarms reporters.
10. Remember that there is a high degree of sensitivity about minorities and women at this time in the history of our nation.
11. A smile is the most disarming thing in the world. Bring to the camera the real person inside you.
12. Be prepared. If you don't know, say "I don't know."
13. There is no such thing as "off-the-record." Beware of the reporter who says, "This is off-the-record."
14. You can ask to talk to the reporter about something before you go on camera. If the reporter won't allow this, don't talk.
15. It is a good idea to suggest a place for the interview. Get an appropriate visual backdrop.
16. Watch hazards around you. Don't swivel in a chair. Don't fidget. Calm down, even if it means that you grab a desk in front of you or behind you.
17. Take your time.

18. Ask to reshoot if you are extremely dissatisfied with the interview.
19. Limit the number of remarks and focus on two or three major points.
20. Ask the reporter who he or she not only has talked to already but also will talk to before this story is over.
21. You can occasionally stop a reporter dead in his or her tracks by saying, "I have no earthly idea what you're talking about."
22. The school or central office is private property. Be aware, however, that television cameras can "shoot" onto your property from a nearby site without your permission.

Familiarity with television interviews will be enhanced as you have more and more experiences with reporters. How does one get better and better at this? Practice . . . practice . . . and more practice. "Winston Churchill was asked what he did in his spare time. He responded, 'I rehearse my extemporaneous speeches' " (Adams, 1983, p. 229).

It should be clear that television is such a volatile medium, one used by more people than any other electronic medium, that it can be a key factor in both preventing and dealing with derailment.

Writing affords you another vehicle for communication with parents and others interested in schools. Time and time again, parents share with others messages from educators that have serious spelling and grammatical errors. Teachers' comments on student papers also sometimes have such errors. Parents ask, "How can they teach good writing when they don't know what good writing is?"

Correct spelling and grammar are important table manners of leadership. Because we all make spelling and grammatical errors, the secret is to have a proficient copy editor who will proofread our memos and other communications. It takes extra effort and time to use a proofreader, but many an embarrassing moment can be avoided with such effort.

An important question to ask in sending a letter or memorandum is, "What is my purpose in doing this?" This purpose should

be clearly stated, with concrete next steps spelled out concisely and precisely, so that the parents or other adults know what they are expected to do in response to your communication. In the event that you want to be sure of a response from a person, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Finally, always send clean copy. Poorly typed communications and badly photocopied materials send the message that you are sloppy and unprofessional.

Miscellaneous table manners of leadership are as follows:

1. When leaving a message on a telephone answering machine, state your name, telephone number, nature of the business, and the best time to return the call. *State this information slowly.* Remember, the person listening to your request is writing the information down.
2. Before meeting with other persons or having important phone conversations, prepare for the content of the conversations, even if this means writing notes from which you speak.
3. Always give your full name when making a phone call. Many people begin speaking and the other party has no idea who it is.
4. There are two major ways to ensure you that you can do something with the support of your so-called bureaucratic superiors: (a) remove irritants, and (b) be willing to share the credit if efforts are successful and to share the blame if they are not.
5. When substantive agreements are arrived at over the telephone, follow up with a memorandum of understanding, concluding with "Unless I hear from you otherwise, I'll assume this is correct."
6. Log important contacts with other parties.

We would do well to remind ourselves that all forms of communication are promissory activity (Goffman, 1959, pp. 2-3). We promise that we will act out what we have said we will do. The details of relating to others, what we call the table manners of

leadership, are an important but insufficient element of creative leadership. When such details are part of the leader's total effectiveness, they have verisimilitude or the ring of truth. The creative leader relates to others and self with honesty, integrity, and authenticity.

The Teacher Leader and Meetings

How many times have you heard educators say that meetings are a waste of time? In the next breath, they expect you to be a productive participant in a meeting where they are the designated leader. They can't have it both ways. The secret is to have meetings when they can be productive and not have them when they are not needed. When a meeting can be productive, it is important to know how to get what you want out of it. In fact, that is the first question the teacher must ask: "What is the purpose for this meeting?"

A personal real-life example from my (Brubaker's) life will illustrate this matter. We were building the foundation for a new house and I thought it would be useful to talk to a few mortgage lending agencies about finances. After each meeting, I returned to my family with a sense of no direction and no accomplishment. In talking to our builder, I learned the exact language necessary to meet my purpose and used it at a meeting with the CEO of a bank after brief small talk: "What I would like today is preloan approval so that when the house is built we will be set to get the mortgage." The CEO looked over the application and said, "You have it." His secretary then typed out a letter to that effect and our family was on track after several days of not even being at the "station."

Many meetings are like the early meetings with lending institution people. In fact, leaders at such meetings sometimes begin the meeting by saying, "What is it that we need to do today?" A well-run meeting begins by having the assigned leader state the purpose for the meeting. The following is an example:

> We have 45 minutes this afternoon for our leadership team meeting. You will note that our agenda is divided into two

> parts, with information items in Part 2. You can read these on your own. Our purpose for this meeting is to discuss the two items in Part 1: (a) ways in which we can get members of our grade-level teams to give us their views on various subjects more effectively and (b) ways in which we, as members of the leadership team, can communicate more effectively with them. I will take notes on our discussion, type and photocopy them, and get them to you tomorrow.

Several messages have been sent to committee members with the leader's brief introduction. First, the leader has done her homework by preparing an agenda. Second, the leader doesn't want to waste members' time by going over information items that can be easily read. Third, the leader, because of her experience in previous meetings has developed a premeeting ritual in which she visualizes what she wants to happen in the meeting, thus giving her confidence from the moment she enters the meeting room. Fourth, the leader demonstrates that this meeting is important by saying that she will type and distribute notes from the meeting within 24 hours.

We have attended hundreds of leadership team meetings and can quickly identify those leaders who are real professionals. They are artists who know the correct mix of formality and informality. If the group is moving too much toward one pole or the other, the leader takes steps to achieve proper balance. Committee members leave such meetings with the feeling that much has been done and in an enjoyable way.

One of the biggest challenges facing the teacher leader who is expected to facilitate a leadership team meeting is to keep the tone of the meeting from becoming too negative. A committee will occasionally have a person who simply wants to gripe about everything. Sometimes such persons are not even conscious of their negative influence. If other members of the committee are engaged in work that leads to positive outcomes, the negative person may well be crowded out of his or her funk. However, at times the assigned leader will need to directly address the problem in a one-on-one situation.

The teacher leader who is effective in leading leadership team meetings actively listens to language used by participants. Language is a kind of "emotional shorthand" that quickly conveys meanings to people. While sitting in on leadership team meetings, we have collected a number of morale-building and morale-breaking phrases.

Morale-Building Phrases

"I'm relating so much better to _____."
"I'm really hopeful about what we can do together."
"I can express my ideas in these meetings without being shot down."
"We cooperate despite our differences."
"We go to each other for suggestions because we know that we're accepted."
"No one person dominates in this group."
"When a person in this group takes on an assignment, we know that it will be done."
"When a person from this committee learns something, she brings it back to the group and shares it with all of us."

Morale-Breaking Phrases

"It won't work."
"Too much paperwork."
"It's too late to begin this."
"What's the matter with the way we do it now?"
"The problem is that they are all just too lazy."
"We just don't have the time to do it."
"All those deadlines."
"With this short notice, I don't have any suggestions."
"You'd think someone else would do it."
"They'll never read it anyway."
"I've already got a full load."
"Let's do it some other time."
"It seems to me this is the job of the leader, not us."
"I'm not paid for this."
"Because we don't really make the decision, we're just going through the moves."

We sometimes ask a recorder to write down key emotive terms during a workshop of half a day or so and then have participants tell us what they mean by these terms. The following list illustrates the results of this exercise:[2]

Paperwork—A symbol for waste of time, busywork, extra duties, bureaucratic directives and the bureaucracy itself, reluctance of the leader to accept responsibility.

Deadline—A symbol for the authority of the leader, the bureaucratic hierarchy, extra duties, pressure.

Memo—A symbol for bureaucratic hierarchy, a well-organized leader who has taken time to remind group members of what has occurred or what will occur, sometimes all are punished for one person's behavior, feeling that some good might have come from the meeting after all.

Activity-oriented, hands-on, manipulative materials—A symbol for educationese, the need someone feels for students to learn directly by manipulating things.

Objectives, goals, rationale—A symbol for boundaries, and the need to organize in order to strive toward predetermined outcomes.

Individualized instruction—A symbol for more work on the teacher's part.

Textbook—A symbol for the "bible," keeping things as they are (manageable and secure).

Letter from downtown—A symbol for "God directed," more paperwork, authority and power of bureaucrats.

We to I—A symbol for the leader's move from democratic "we" to "I" in order to draw on higher position of authority as disagreement occurs.

Agreement to adjourn—A symbol for one thing all agree on.

Informal seating arrangements—A symbol for leader's desire to have cooperative, nonhierarchical sharing of ideas.

Use of first names—A symbol for cooperation, collegiality, no hierarchy.

Leader starts meeting on time, stops when appropriate, has previously distributed agenda—A symbol for the value the leader places on time as a resource for participants.

Leader's smiles, relaxed but organized manner—A symbol for the leader's desire to be there, the acceptance of what group members can do.

Leader's choice of a good meeting site—A symbol that the leader has done his or her homework and cares about both participants and the meeting.

Leader squarely faces conflict and differences of opinion—A symbol for the leader's desire to be honest about his or her own feelings and consciously choosing the best way to express these feelings. (Brubaker, 1982, pp. 97-99)

As a leader in meetings, you may also wish to participate in this exercise to see what committee members identify as key emotive terms and what they mean.

The Teacher Leader as Networker

Meetings tend to be somewhat formal in nature even when a leader is more comfortable with an informal leadership style. Much, if not most, of the teacher leader's effectiveness will depend on his or her networking ability. Networking may be defined as the informal process of actively sharing information and support. Leaders who are comfortable with more autocratic hierarchical decision-making frameworks usually fear networking, because there are no clear lines of authority and control is not necessarily in the hands of those higher up in the organization.

The electronic revolution in general and the computer revolution in particular are evidence of the growth of networking. Individuals don't have to go through layer after layer of bureaucracies to get what they want. Everything from clothes to cars can be ordered while sitting at your keyboard. The direct participation of constituents without having to go through their elected representatives, and the widespread influence of television, have created revolutionary changes in our political system. In fact, politicians have to run fast to try to catch up with their constituents.

All of these changes can work to the advantage of teacher leaders as they access and use information. Change can be intro-

duced and maintained, and those things the teacher leader wants to conserve can be conserved through effective networking. Shared learning can facilitate a sense of community in a school or a setting within a school.

The following suggestions are the result of observations we have made in watching teacher leaders and other educators use networking as a vehicle for more effective leadership:

Sometimes just introducing two people to each other will make things happen. A teacher leader related, "I introduced a member of our leadership team to one of my professors at the university who is an expert in reading education. They started sharing resources—ideas and materials—that made their way into our leadership team meetings."

Taking the initiative, acting, not just reacting, can make a difference. A first-year teacher who was asked to join the leadership team shared her feelings about moving from the reactor to the actor role: "I was reluctant to contact people at first, but once I got started in building a network, things began to happen and I gained confidence."

Occasionally drop by for informal conversations with persons in your network. These conversations symbolize your personal interest in the lives of people in your network. It is sometimes useful to share materials in order to "break the ice." A sense of humor is also appreciated.

Give attention to members of a person's support group. It is easy to walk by such persons. While talking to a person in your network, listen carefully to discover who key persons are in his or her support group. A teacher leader describes how this worked for her: "I used to just walk by a particular administrator's secretary but when I took time to get to know the secretary, I discovered a good deal about this administrator's leadership style. And, I can get a lot of things done through the secretary that help our leadership team."

Don't always expect immediate results when you introduce change in your network. The teacher leader will sometimes be surprised to find that the seed of an idea planted earlier will surface at a later date. The network member will usually forget where he or she got the idea originally and will instead introduce the idea as if he or she originated it.

Don't assume that the chemistry of your one-to-one relationships with persons in your network will be the same when a group of such persons gets together. It is natural to assume that your friends will also be friends of each other and yet we hear of instance after instance of disillusionment when network members discover otherwise. "We just assumed that our spouses would get along," said one teacher leader, "but the four of us just weren't comfortable when we got together."

Because persons are expected to conform to role expectations in more formal settings, don't be shocked when they act somewhat differently in less formal settings or vice versa. "The first time I met our leadership team chair was when she gave a speech at our faculty orientation meeting in the fall. She really seemed uptight and formal. I was surprised at how much fun she could be when I got to know her." It is useful to remind ourselves that both persons and settings have personalities.

Give attention to symbols that indicate ways in which networking is effective or ineffective. A teacher leader was happily surprised when a message she sent to a leadership team member on e-mail over the weekend became part of that member's report to the faculty on Monday afternoon.

Give attention to ways that personas invite and fail to invite others to enter or not enter a network. "We really need her expertise and should invite her to talk to us about the new reading program at our next leadership team meeting," a fellow teacher leader said. "She has enough to do and really isn't that well received," a teacher leader said about a central office supervisor.

Networking gives you access to information about the effectiveness of persons in organizations.

Be aware of the fact that some people will feel that your network contacts invade their territory. Informal relationships often tend to threaten persons who feel comfortable and secure with hierarchical relationships. These people will therefore find your networking threatening. "How can I run this department when the superintendent makes so many decisions on the golf course?" a director of personnel said.

Recognize the fact that some persons in the formal structure will participate in formal decision-making situations even though they know that the real decision making has occurred or will occur in informal networking situations. There are times when people play out their roles in formal situations knowing full well that important decisions are rarely made in such settings. Recognizing the importance of ritual can keep you from becoming cynical. Also, it is helpful to realize that you will also be on the other end of this at times.

Give attention to the importance of how much information a person is willing to give about network contacts. The more information given, the higher the trust level.

Be aware of the fact that persons with formal positions of authority will still use old informal networks to some extent. A principal in a new school was somewhat surprised to discover that teachers in her former school still called for advice. These teachers also had a hidden agenda: They wanted inside information as to what was going on in the central office.

Recognize that potential conflict between informal networking and "going through channels" exists. Once again, lateral decisions in a network threaten the command-compliance decision making in the bureaucratic hierarchy. Effective teacher leaders will be envied by some bureaucrats who think others don't know their place. (Brubaker, 1982, pp. 83-85)

Conclusion

The second wave of school reform began in the 1980s. It "emphasized the need to improve education by decentralizing and professionalizing teaching, by investing in the knowledge and skills of educators rather than prescriptions of uniform practice" (Darling-Hammond, 1993, p. 754). The translation of this second wave of reform comes to life in the words of Doris Henderson (interview, March 1996), principal of Guilford Primary School in Greensboro, North Carolina. She describes the characteristics of her school's teacher leaders as follows:

> They are catalysts who are eager to share new ideas with each other. They are proactive and don't sit and wait for someone else to lead. They are excited about education and learning and have a way of spreading the gospel of the school and education. They are always open to learning, are constantly curious, and always seem to be asking questions. They are kind to children and ask them things that make them grow--the why questions. They are positive can-do people who don't let things get them down. They are highly motivated hard workers who are always willing to go the extra mile. They know that flash and fads are no substitute for effective leadership, good teaching, and learning. And, they are strong models for all of the good things I've just mentioned about them. I am so proud to be their principal.

We hope that we have left you, the reader, with the feeling that being a teacher leader is a challenging and rewarding position in the school and the school system. In fact, it is the potential and real problems and dilemmas you face that will bring life to your leadership. To be a teacher leader is to have a vision of a better future. It is this hopefulness that is contagious in a school and a school system. And it is this hopefulness that will help you both avoid and deal with derailment.

NOTES

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Resources

We have developed a number of resources that have aided us in leading seminars on the derailment issue. These resources may be read and reacted to privately or in a group setting. They speak to a number of themes connected to both avoiding and dealing with derailment: communication; shared decision making; teaming; leadership effectiveness; community building; interpersonal relationships; sources of power; personal disclosure; and risk taking.

The major part of this section on resources consists of cases, which, as we have said earlier, are the next best thing to being there. These cases will make it clear that there are no quick fixes and simple answers to the complex situations in which educational leaders find themselves. In fact, cases provoke a good deal of discussion because of their complexity.

The format of cases presented is that each case will be followed by alternative responses, after which the best possible rationale for each response is given. We also give our opinion as to what is in our judgment the *best* answer. We invite you to revise this format so that it works for you, given the particular situation in which you find yourself.

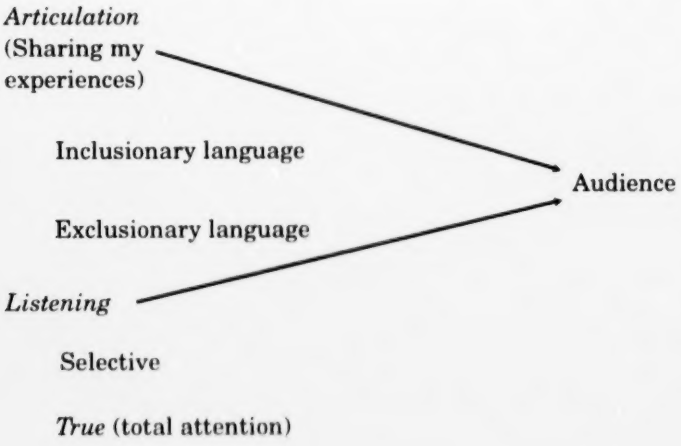
Resource A

Important Questions Related to Creative Educational Leadership

1. In whose interest is this decision? [Who profits?]
2. Whose ox is gored? [Who suffers?]
3. How shall we live together? [The constitutional issue.]
4. How shall I live with myself? [The personal issue.]
5. How is critique helpful in this situation? [Critique is summary, adoption of a point of view.]
6. What is the transactional context and how does it influence persons and organizations involved?
7. What is the core of my work?
8. Who defines the core of my work? [If I enjoy the core of my work, I feel good about my work and myself.]
9. How can I creatively survive if my superordinate has an outside/in "get the glory approach"?
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.

Resource B

Effective Communication



Resource C

Entrance and Exit Rituals

This inventory is designed for you to write notes about entrance and exit rituals that do exist and should exist in the setting in which you give leadership.

What *entrance* rituals presently exist in the setting in which you give leadership?	What *entrance* rituals should exist in the setting in which you give leadership?
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

What *exit* rituals exist in the setting in which you give leadership?	What *exit* rituals should exist in the setting in which you give leadership?
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Entrance and Exit Rituals
(Completed Example)

This inventory is designed for you to write notes about entrance and exit rituals that do exist and should exist in the setting in which you give leadership.

What entrance rituals presently exist in the setting in which you give leadership?	What entrance rituals should exist in the setting in which you give leadership?
1. Principal enters the room to greet parents and others, shakes hands, and has good eye contact.	1. Keep this practice and continue to model and discuss.
2. Principal has good energy and shares vision for the school.	2. Continue this behavior.
3. Principal has high counter that separates guests from secretaries and self.	3. Remove counter. Offer guests coffee. Shake hands and have good eye contact.

What exit rituals exist in the setting in which you give leadership?	What exit rituals should exist in the setting in which you give leadership?
1. Principal and others walk parents and guests out school door.	1. Continue practice.
2. Good things going on discussed as parents leave the building.	2. Continue practice
3. Parents and guests invited back and interest shown in them and their children.	3. Continue practices. (Have an inservice program for teachers in which these practices are discussed. Perhaps videotape positive practices.)

Resource D

Working Alone and Working With a Team

A school and school system based on democratic tenets recognize and value autonomy (working alone) and working as part of a team. It is a challenge to each leader to find the most satisfying balance between these two ways of operating.

We have found the following exercise helpful in that it promotes honest communication as to how each person has fashioned a professional life that includes working alone and working with others on a team.

Please complete the following paragraphs:

1. There are times when I enjoy working alone at work. Some of these times are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Some of the reasons why I enjoy working alone are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. There are times when I don't enjoy working alone. Instead, I want to be with others as part of a team. Some of these times are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Some of the reasons why I enjoy working on a team are:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you know when you're a team member?

1. You recognize that what you do affects others on the team as well as those the team influences—for example, students.
2. No one on the team projects the feeling that he or she is better than others.

3. You are privately and publicly willing to acknowledge other team members' talents and contributions.
4. You rarely feel lonely.
5. You rarely feel down but instead feel lifted up by other team members and those you influence.
6. You feel energized.
7. You discover human and nonhuman resources you didn't know you had.
8. You have the courage to do what is right.
9. Your vision for the future is sharpened, thus motivating you and others.
10. You can agree and disagree with team members without taking this personally.

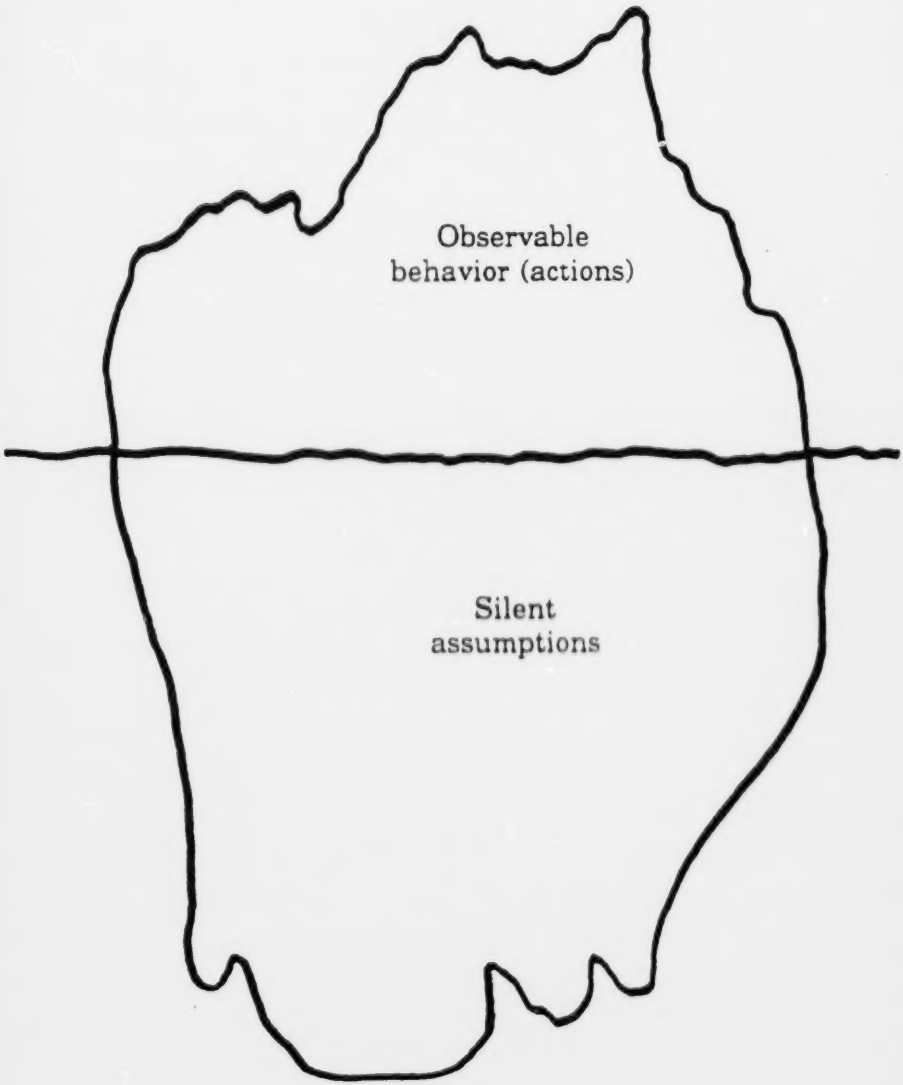
Resource E

The Power of Silent Assumptions

Contradictions may serve as the fuel for our engagement in creative processes. As we wrestle with contradictions that bother us, we are challenged to view an issue from different angles and be honest with ourselves about our feelings and behavior.

We usually use our survival skills to cope with difficulties created by contradictions, but with time, some contradictions cause stress and our bodies tell us we're in trouble: "I'm not hungry." "I eat too much." "I can't sleep." "All I want to do is sleep." "I get too intense and have little patience."

We can continue to try to cope with contradictions but in the long run it is healthier to identify and assess the *silent assumptions* that are the substructure for our attitudes and actions. A drawing of an iceberg illustrates the relationship between observable behavior (actions) and silent assumptions.


Observable
behavior (actions)
Silent
assumptions

Resource F

Contradictions

Contradiction comes from the Latin *contra* (against) + *dicere* or *dictus* (to say). It is defined in the dictionary as "the act of saying the opposite of something already said."

Two kinds of contradictions facing the educational leader are the basis for the following exercise. These contradictions are (a) those one chooses to celebrate and (b) those one chooses to work on to try to reconcile.

Please identify contradictions you face as a leader and celebrate and those you choose to work on to try to reconcile.

Column 1 (celebrate)	Column 2 (reconcile)

Following are examples of the two kinds of contradictions facing the educational leader: (a) those one chooses to celebrate and (b) those one chooses to work on to try to reconcile.

Column 1 (celebrate)	Column 2 (reconcile)
"We have excellent parent involvement and this means we give many of our resources (e.g., time and effort) to parents."	"I always feel like I'm the person in the middle."
"There are always more desires than resources."	"I appreciate the energy of young members of the staff but many are really very naive about what I as a principal can and can't do."
"Because I have a proven track record, they call on me to do more than I sometimes want to do."	"Some teachers nag, which I don't like, and yet I admire commitment."
	"As a woman administrator, I always confront (have to deal with) the ol' boys' club."

Resource G

Contradictions Facing the Educational Leader

Professional autonomy	State regulation and supervision
"You are the professional with expertise."	"Outside consultants are the experts."
Competition with other schools	Cooperation with other schools
Display accomplishments	Quietly go ahead with "business"

Think (plan) ahead

Catch up (look backward)

Be positive

Face the negative

Exercise: What metaphor represents how you feel about contradictions at work? For example, juggling? Steering a dog by moving its tail? Herding cats?

Contradiction: Many People View Politics as "A Necessary Evil"

Politics: The Art of the Possible

Clean Politics	Dirty Politics
Examples you have observed in school systems:	Examples you have observed in school systems:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Responses to: Contradiction: Many People View Politics as "A Necessary Evil"

Politics: The Art of the Possible

Clean politics	Dirty Politics
Examples you have observed in school systems:	Examples you have observed in school systems:
Funding for all teachers to go to workshops	Assistant superintendent fired and sentenced to 5 years for fraud
Principal gives honest answers	Good recommendations given to poor teachers to leave town
Principal built case to fire incompetent teacher	Testing irregularities
Principal is advocate for those with little political clout (e.g., children)	My interview a sham as they already picked someone
Superintendent walks the way she talks	Use children for political advantage

Resource H

Case Studies

Case 1: Getting on Track

After receiving your undergraduate teaching degree with a major in science, you teach for 3 years and then decide to get a master's degree in educational administration with a minor in science education. After receiving your administrative certification, you apply for assistant principalships year after year to no avail. In fact, during this 5-year interval, you have been interviewed for only one assistant principalship.

You are happy as a teacher but really want to see what it would be like to be an assistant principal. You are also well aware that an administrative job would give you a higher salary and more life space. Because you live in a somewhat urban area, you would drive for up to 1 hour each way to take an assistant principalship if it is offered. Before you apply outside your system or give up your administrative dream, you talk to a friend who is a principal in your system. You say, "Please give me honest feedback as to why you think I haven't had more interviews or been given an offer of an assistant principalship." Your friend pauses and replies, "I will give you honest feedback if this is off-the-record but I don't want

this getting back to central office and the director of personnel. Do you still want the feedback?"

You gulp but push on, agreeing to the conditions your friend has stated. Your friend speaks in a straightforward but caring way:

> You are known as a really fine teacher whose interest in students and science has made you highly respected. But principals and central office administrators simply don't see you as an administrator. You dress in an informal and somewhat sloppy way and your classroom looks like a mess even though you can find things when you need them. There are times when your classroom smells from all the animal cages in it. Your problem is one of image. You don't look like an administrator. Until you change this image, you won't get interviews and job offers.

After considering your friend's advice, you recognize that you have several alternatives from which to choose:

1. Give up your dream of becoming an assistant principal and continue to be a respected classroom teacher.
2. Continue to apply for assistant principalships in and near your present school system, but don't make any effort to follow your friend's advice.
3. Take your friend's advice, change your image and teaching behaviors so that they are consistent with your new image, and apply for assistant principalships in your system.
4. Take your friend's advice, change your image and teaching behaviors so that they are consistent with your new image, and apply for assistant principalships in nearby systems.

Case 1: Rationales for Alternative Responses

1. The key to your effective teaching is your authenticity. Your teaching style, including your informal dress and classroom that

looks disorganized, is part of who you are. In the classroom setting, it works. Don't try to be something or someone you aren't. It is better to give up your dream of being an administrator. This may be the best choice if you are basically happy as a classroom teacher and don't want to make changes suggested by your friend.

2. Staying on the same path has the benefit of your keeping your authenticity; however, it is not likely that interviews or administrative job offers will be forthcoming.

3. It will be hard work and you will feel uncomfortable at times as you change some of your personal behaviors, such as improving your dress, and classroom behaviors, such as having a neater, better organized classroom. However, you have invested financial and other resources in getting your master's degree and certification in educational administration without having the opportunity to see how you like administration. The advantage of continuing to apply in your own system is that you won't give up the comfort zone that system gives you, and furthermore, you will probably have to make the changes in your classroom anyway, because other systems will call your principal and others to get a reading on the kind of teacher and educator you are. This response is one of two or three best choices.

4. Changing your image and applying to other systems nearby is a good choice because you will get a fresh start in other systems, whereas some people in your system will always retain the image of you they have had for years. However, you will be making several changes at the same time that can drain your psychological resources. This is an option, however, that is certainly worth examining carefully.

Case 2: Assistant Principal Expected to Run School

You have served as a teacher leader in a school while at the same time getting your master's degree and principal certification. Due to your excellent record in this school, the associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction has recommended

you for an assistant principalship in the same school. You recently received this appointment by the board of education.

The problem is that the principal expects you to run the school. The principal was a coach and then driver's training instructor and has no interest or expertise in curriculum. Furthermore, the principal is rarely in the building between the time children get off the buses in the morning and the time when the buses leave in the afternoon. The principal does personal business throughout the day and is "somewhere between the school and central office," according to the secretary who is an old friend and neighbor of the principal. The principal is frequently out with "the flu" and you sometimes smell alcohol on his breath during the school day.

The principal has 27 years in the retirement system and has made it clear that he will retire in 3 years.

What will you do? Please choose from the following alternatives:

1. Say nothing and go about your business in the most efficient and effective way possible.
2. Do the best job you can but be sure that the associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction understands that you are running the school and the principal has serious problems.
3. Do the best job you can and talk to a few trusted teachers and parents about the principal's problems so that they can support you if things become too difficult.

Case 2: Rationales for the Alternative Responses

1. This response has the virtue of not making waves. You will be recognized by those who count for your excellent work. The difficulty with this position is that if the principal makes a serious mistake, you will be asked why you didn't say anything prior to that time. Seek a better response.

2. The associate superintendent is your advocate, as evidenced by the fact that you were supported for this position. If any action is to be taken by your superordinates, the associate superintendent

will be fully apprised of your situation. If the principal crosses the line and makes a serious mistake, the associate superintendent will also be informed of your situation. If you share your situation with only the associate superintendent, people will probably not call you indiscreet and unprofessional for gossiping. This is the best choice.

3. You will feel better in the short run for talking to teachers and parents—but you will probably pay a high price. The word will quickly get around that you are unprofessional and a gossip. This is a poor choice.

Case 3: Principal Hears New Superintendent's Views on Dress

You are having lunch with the new superintendent before the school year begins. The superintendent says, "You can't convince me that people don't sense whether or not you're professional from the minute they see how you're dressed. Good ol' boy principals usually wear short-sleeved shirts, rather than suits or sharp sport coats, and they often wear outdated ties and plaid blazers." Now that you know your new superintendent's views on these matters, how will you act as principal with regard to them? Choose from the following alternative responses or add a better response of your own.

1. A principal's competence is what counts. Does he or she deliver? Dress is a personal and idiosyncratic matter. Continue to dress as you have and advise fellow principals to do likewise.
2. Make minor adjustments in your dress if they are called for. Advise your colleagues to do likewise.
3. Follow the new superintendent's dress code. Advise your colleagues to do likewise.

Case 3: Rationales for the Alternative Responses

1. Dress is your own business and has nothing to do with success as a principal. You have demonstrated that you have done the job well and people know that. The products of your work are what's really important. Don't openly confront the superintendent, but go about your business as you always have done.

2. You will be a minor irritant on occasion to the superintendent, but you surely won't get into the trouble that you would get into with the first response. Have clothes that are in style, whenever possible, but dress according to what makes you comfortable as much as you can. Be sure to dress appropriately for big occasions when the superintendent wants to show off the staff to the board and the community. Consider the next alternative.

3. Dressing correctly is a small price to pay for the good results you will achieve. Many people will remember the impression you make with your clothes more than anything else. You are more likely to move up the ladder and be a successful administrator if you follow the superintendent's advice. Dress is symbolic, a kind of emotional shorthand, and as such it becomes an important matter to superintendents as they relate to principals. Superintendents want the organization and themselves to look good and appear to be winners.

Case 4: A Site-Based Management Proposal

Your school year begins with a 3-day retreat. Principals in the school system recently attended a conference on Site-Based Management (SBM). They agreed that each school in the system should be invited to apply for pilot or experimental status in moving to an SBM model.

Some reservations are raised about SBM at the conference, although all agree that there are drawbacks with the traditional top-down way of exercising authority in organizations in a new

information age society. And all agree that facilitative power has real potential for professional decision making on the part of teachers and administrators. Facilitative power, according to one principal at the conference, is one way to overcome both obvious and not so obvious areas of disagreement in the school. (By facilitative power, it is meant that you bring out the leadership qualities of others, rather than giving them "commands.")

The main drawback discussed at the conference is that some principals can misuse SBM. Specifically, a principal can blame SBM committee members for his or her own mistakes. And it is also true that ultimately the principal at each school is the formally designated leader who is responsible for the school.

What will your reaction be to the invitation to have your school become a pilot project for SBM? Please choose the best of the following options:

1. Give leadership to not supporting SBM in your school.
2. Give leadership to supporting SBM in your school.
3. Let things take their course. Either way is fine.

Case 4: Rationales for the Alternative Responses

1. Shared decision making, the essence of the SBM model, is a misnomer. There is always one formally designated leader in the school—the principal. And if he or she is expected to suspend his or her positional authority, that positional authority can always be returned at a moment's notice. All committees in a school are simply advisory, with real power in the hands of the principal. To pretend otherwise is deceitful. A weak principal can forget his or her role, and the faculty and perhaps the students can take over the school. Chaos will then reign. Be wary of mechanisms that quickly promise change. The quick fix doesn't work. Also, if SBM is put in place, faculty will be expected to enter into an intense and long-range covenant with one another and the principal. You are hired to teach, not administer the school. All of these arguments hold in some schools where SBM has real potential. To

reject the proposal out-of-hand for a pilot project is a mistake. Consider other alternatives.

2. The invitation to apply for pilot status in the new SBM program has tremendous potential for effecting change in the school. Facilitative power is clearly consistent with societal changes in general, and the move from an industrial age to an information age society in particular. It is also a sign of hope that professionalism can be enhanced and a sense of community can be increased in the school. This does mean the probability of an intense covenant of considerable duration, but the payoff can be significant. You must be alert, however, to the possibility that the principal, who is formally designated as the final authority in the school, can take back at any moment power shared with teachers. If such an event occurs, you and your colleagues must know how to use other sources of power to achieve your goals. In conclusion, there is the real possibility of creating a Win/Win climate in your school. Go for it.

3. There are advantages to not getting involved. You won't be blamed if things go wrong, and you can hang around the edges, thus saving your resources, such as time, energy, and expertise. However, the move toward SBM has gone too far to simply play a passive role. This Win/Win or No Deal way of relating to colleagues and the principal will in effect keep you out of the school arena. You will not accept your professional responsibility by taking this stance and you could well convey the feeling that you are either uninterested or too good to get involved. Seek a better response.

Case 5: New Superintendent Edges You Out of Position

You are a 20-year veteran of a fairly large rural system in the Midwest who has worked your way through the ranks of teacher, assistant principal, and principal to become assistant superintendent for curriculum for the past 5 years. You and your spouse, a prominent attorney in the area, have high credibility in the community and the school system.

The system has been the scene of tremendous controversy, with several superintendents and split boards in recent years. You, however, have not only survived but also been a favorite of the past two superintendents due to your expertise and loyalty to these superintendents. Things have suddenly changed with the appointment of a young, out-of-state superintendent by a 5 to 2 vote of the board. The new superintendent quickly announces a restructuring plan, which will bring a former deputy superintendent from the former school system into your system as the new deputy superintendent in charge of personnel, operations, and curriculum. The superintendent announces this to the press, saying that two assistant superintendencies will be eliminated, thus saving taxpayers more than $100,000. You are offered the position of staff development for one year—if you wish to look for another job—or permanently if you wish to stay with the system.

What will you do? Please choose from the following options:

1. Resign and look for employment elsewhere.
2. Take the position of director of staff development and look for another assistant superintendency.
3. Take the position of director of staff development and ride it out until your retirement in a decade or less.
4. Use every source of power at your disposal to fight the new superintendent and the decision to derail you.

Case 5: Rationales for the Alternative Responses

1. Resigning will give you the immediate satisfaction of getting out of a system in turmoil. It will also make a public statement concerning your views of the new superintendent. However, you will probably be out of work for one year or longer as it will take time to get a new position—even if you use your contacts with two previous superintendents to get a job. It also will be difficult for you to relocate, given the rural district in which you live and your family commitments. Please choose a better option.

2. Taking the offer of the director of staff development will give you one year to decide if you want to seek employment elsewhere or reach an accommodation with the new superintendent. However, given the turmoil in the system and your reading of the leadership style of the new superintendent, you will probably be in for a year that is very, very difficult. Essentially, you will get a salary but have no power or influence on the new superintendent and deputy superintendent. This is probably one of two best choices.

3. Taking the job of director of staff development and riding it out until retirement will assure you of a salary, but financial security will be won at a high price. It will probably be devastating, given the fact that you won't respect your superordinates and could well not want to be at work much of the time. Continue to search for a better answer.

4. Using all of the sources of power at your disposal can certainly make things hot for the new superintendent and deputy superintendent. You have high credibility in the community and can use the media, especially the local newspaper, to state your case. And, your spouse could well announce candidacy for the school board when the next election takes place. [This may assure you of a return offer when you leave the community briefly for another challenging position.] While you are making your public protest, you can use your contacts with the two previous superintendents, who are now located in other communities in the state, to get an assistant superintendency, central office leadership position, or principalship. You may have to live in another community for 4 nights a week but you will have a positive work situation that can make all the difference, given your professional commitments. This option and the second option are your two best choices.

Case 6: New Principal States Intention to Ignore History and Culture of the School

Recent years have been very difficult for you in your school. The recently released principal had a leadership style that divided the faculty on a number of key issues. As a result, the superinten-

dent of schools has recommended and the board of education has appointed a new principal from another state.

During the fall orientation meeting of the faculty, the new principal says the following: "It is time for a fresh start for all of us in this school. I don't want any of you to come to me with stories about past difficulties. Let us begin as if this is a brand-new school with brand-new faculty members."

What will you do in reaction to the new principal's comments? Please choose the best of the following alternatives:

1. Ignore the new principal's comments.
2. Remind yourself that the history and culture of the school are a significant variable in decision making at the present time, and make this known to the faculty and principal at the orientation meeting for the faculty.
3. The history and culture of the school are important to keep in mind as present decisions are made. However, you must find a better time—probably in a private conversation with the principal—to share your view with the principal.

Case 6: Rationales for the Alternative Responses

1. Once again, to ignore the matter will conserve your resources in the short run and keep you out of trouble. However, the new principal's position is important enough so that you will not be meeting your professional responsibilities by doing nothing. Choose a better option.

2. You are right to give attention to the history and culture of the setting. If you address this matter directly, at the front end of your relationship with the new principal, he or she and the faculty will know that you are willing to act out your beliefs. The difficulty with this response is that the new principal is trying to establish his or her credibility with the faculty for the first time in an official setting—the first faculty meeting. Your outspoken action will leave him or her little room to save face. Seek a better alternative.

3. Some action on your part needs to be taken. The history and culture of the setting must be taken into account by your new principal and other school leaders in the decision-making process. The best time to deal with this issue is in a one-to-one conversation with the new principal. You will not be openly challenging the new principal in a formal setting this way.

Case 7: What Kind of Superintendent Will I Be?

You have been on the fast track, having moved from teacher leader to assistant principal to principal to associate superintendent in record time. Your superintendent is featured in an article by an education editor who seems to have a clear view of how different people shape the superintendency. The education writer did a column in which he identified three superintendent leader styles: (a) the academic visionary who knows how to bring the schools up-to-date in a fast-changing world; (b) the hands-on leader with special interest in curriculum, instruction, and the nuts and bolts of the classroom; and (c) the politician with slick management patter and an easy way with constituents. The third style, according to the writer, could get along with many different factions and balance their demands so that they feel reasonably if not totally satisfied. They all feel that the superintendent is on their side.

What do you see as the strengths of each superintendent leader style and how do you fit into this picture? Please choose from the following options:

1. The academic visionary.
2. The curriculum and instruction leader.
3. The politician.

Case 7: Rationales for the Alternative Responses

1. The academic is up-to-date on the context in which education and schooling exist. This will be a real plus with long-range

planning, for this kind of superintendent will have not only more encompassing global perspective but also an understanding of the roles that particular organizations can play in relation to the system. A superintendent with these strengths will be respected for being bright and current. This kind of superintendent will also be highly respected by university scholars and other academics.

2. The superintendent who knows and values curriculum, instruction, and the nuts and bolts of the classroom will have an affinity connection with teachers who place high value on such matters. Many parents will also see this kind of leader as an instructional advocate for their children. After all, schools should have as their primary goal the teaching and learning of children. A superintendent with this expertise will be up-to-date on the most recent trends in curriculum and instruction and will be able to help teachers and others decide which trends are worth implementing in this school system.

3. The superintendent as politician will be seen as a savvy representative of the political interests of assistant principals, principals, and central office leaders. This superintendent will have his or her feet on the ground and not be led astray by the idealism and romanticism of some teachers and parents. A main advantage of the superintendent as politician is that various factions in the system, factions that can be very disruptive and contentious, will be mediated by a real professional who knows how to use power to the ultimate advantage of all concerned.

Case 8: Personal Disclosure and the Leader's Credibility

You are at a seminar on curriculum leadership. There is a spirited discussion concerning whether leaders in an organization should deliberately create distance between self and others. One leader in your seminar presents a point of view with considerable forcefulness:

At the beginning of his administration, President Clinton took a select group of advisers to Camp David for a weekend retreat. The press reported that at this retreat a facilitator was working with the group, and President Clinton said that as a child he was called "chubby" and this negative labeling was very hurtful to him.

This is the kind of thing that demeans the office of the presidency. The head of an organization not only represents self but also the institution of the presidency. You have to keep distance between yourself and others, and this kind of behavior by the president works against the credibility of the president and the institution of the presidency.

Another leader at the seminar strongly disagrees with the first leader's statement: "I have even greater respect for President Clinton because of this. He has demonstrated that he is human and suffers at times just like the rest of us."

You are asked for your views on this matter. What will you say, and what is the rationale for your position? Please choose from the alternative rationales that follow:

1. The first speaker's position is correct. Distance must be kept between the leader and others in the organization.
2. The second speaker is correct and the first speaker is off base. Showing your feelings and being close to followers is simply being human.

Case 8: Rationales for the Alternative Responses

1. President Clinton made a mistake in supporting a format with a facilitator. As President of the United States, he is the "boss" and he demeaned himself by stepping away from hierarchy. He should share such feelings in the privacy of his family but not outside that institution. Some people will always take advantage of you if you let down your guard. Showing your emotions, particularly as a leader, scares a lot of people. President Clinton

added to their fright by doing what he did. In summary, he made the mistake of stepping outside his role.

2. This case is all about expectations—expectations one has of self, and others have of the leader. President Clinton's response was like a breath of fresh air. Most presidents have been out of touch with people and their own humanity. President Clinton has a right to hurt, just like everybody else. Sharing his feelings about being wronged is a sign of good mental health, and his presidency is better because of such disclosure. He also broke the stereotype that only women are nurturing leaders. He exhibited real courage and leadership in what he did.

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Call: 805-499-9774 Fax: 805-499-0871

ISBN 0-8039-6538-9
780803 965386
90000